

The Nation.

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EDI

HYPOCRITICAL WARFARE

No one should be fooled by the Administration's claim that the downing of two Libyan MIGs was unconnected to the controversy over the chemicals plant abuilding in Rabta. Neither do legitimate fears about Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's toxic intentions have anything to do with the escalated hostilities promoted by Washington. There are many means short of missile-firing to reduce the risk of Libya's weapons program—if indeed America's notoriously off-kilter intelligence about Qaddafi is correct in its estimates this time. In the present case, war as an extension of diplomacy is hypocritical and irresponsible.

Some twenty nations have joined the chemical weapons club over the years without threats of invasion by the White House. The United States itself has thousands of tons of chemical warfare matériel stored around the country. What's more, Iraq, which became the object of a U.S. "tilt" in its war with Iran, actually used poison gas to murder thousands of its own Kurdish people.

In 1983, it was Reagan who ordered the Pentagon to break a fourteen-year moratorium on the production of such monstrous weapons; the deadly game was eventually resumed after none other than Vice President Bush cast three tie-breaking votes in the Senate. Now the President-elect would have us believe that one of his top priorities will be to deal with "this terrible scourge."

Bush had a chance to show that this was more than pre-inaugural rhetoric by pushing the Administration to reinstitute the production moratorium. The worldwide conference on chemical weapons in Paris that began January 7 offered the perfect forum. But the unlikelihood of such a step was underscored by the air show over the Mediterranean. It is far easier to send up our jets for a final patriotic spasm in Reagan's terminal hours and continue the convenient demonization of Qaddafi.

MEETING WITH ARAFAT

Stanley K. Sheinbaum

TWO CHEERS FOR DEBT

Robert Heilbroner

THE TEXANS ARE COMING!

Molly Ivins

PLAYING DOWN UNEMPLOYMENT

William Serrin

'THE THINKING REED'

Alfred J. Rieber

COURBET

Arthur C. Danto

FUNDING DEFORESTATION

CONSERVATION WOES AT THE WORLD BANK

BRUCE RICH

The World Bank had a tough year in 1988. The globe's largest development bureaucracy is still recovering from a demoralizing reorganization that involved the sacking of 300 of its approximately 6,000 staff members. Congress approved the U.S. share of a requested \$75 billion capital increase only reluctantly. The bank was lambasted on Capitol Hill and in the financial press for its inaction in addressing the Third World debt crisis. In only one area, the environment, did the bank try to take decisive action to stem a rising torrent of criticism.

That attempted turnaround dates back to May 5, 1987, when president Barber Conable delivered a startling speech in Washington on the World Bank and the environment. Conable acknowledged that the bank's ecological record had failed to match the claims of its public relations staff. "If the World Bank has been part of the problem in the past," he said, "it can and will be a strong force in finding solutions in the future." Conable also felt constrained to deliver a public *mea culpa* for a single project—the gigantic road-building and agricultural colonization scheme in north-west Brazil known as Polonoroeste, where he admitted that "the bank misread the human, institutional and physical realities of the jungle and the frontier."

The recent murder of Chico Mendes, a leader of the Brazilian rubber tappers' union, illustrates that the political stakes associated with such international bank projects are high. Mendes had led a campaign in recent years

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LETTERS.

WONK ZONK

Washington

While it's nice to have our collection *Winning America: Ideas and Leadership for the 1990s* described as "lay[ing] out the progressive agenda more completely than any other book of its type," James Ledbetter does a real disservice to the genre of policy books in his review of it ["The Policy Jocks," Oct. 31]. Ledbetter says about such books: "No one reads them." (Try that one on the Heritage Foundation's 1981 *Mandate for Leadership*, the Reagan Administration's bible.) And: Our contribution to the genre is "scatter-shot," "radiates negativity" (example: "the facts in *Winning America* form a wholesale indictment of the inequity, abuse and absurdity of American society"), "almost unreadable" and "a wish list for the left."

If by "scatter-shot" Ledbetter means that the thirty-eight essays in the book cover all substantive bases, we plead guilty. Our aim in fact was to have a platform proposal, supportive essay and list of organizations, readings and potential appointees on every major domestic and international topic. If in cataloging the economic, social, environmental, military and political crises the United States faces we are radiantly negative, we regard that as an appropriate and realistic political stance.

It's hard to deal with a sweeping putdown of the literary styles of three dozen authors. Policy papers aren't *People* magazine articles. To require that all such endeavors fit a journalistic format and style is unrealistic; and in any case, many of the chapters (e.g., those by Nicholas Johnson, Roger Wilkins, Matt Witt, Robert Gottlieb and Helen Ingram) are in fact quite lively, and many of them were written by professional journalists.

The "wish list for the left" canard embodies some real political differences between our book and your reviewer: namely, how the definition of political realism is shaped by objective conditions and demands. Ledbetter uses as his example Chester Hartman's chapter on housing. The outrage of pervasive homelessness, plus other manifestations of a structural affordability crisis in the U.S. housing system (mortgage foreclosures, overcrowding and doubling up, 8 million families paying 50 percent, 60 percent and more of their income for rent) in fact are creating a politically realistic demand for shifting large segments of the housing stock into nonspeculative forms of ownership, establishing a right to decent, affordable housing and vastly increasing government intervention in the housing market and the level of Federal subsidies. Recently introduced Congressional bills, the organizing and advocacy work of state, local and national housing groups and the increasing media focus on housing problems all attest to this.

We regard *Winning America* as a guidepost for progressive forces in and out of government, one that eventually may come to have the same impact that the Reagan Administration-oriented policy books had.

Finally, we note that Ledbetter is co-editor of *Ideas That Work: 60 Solutions for America's 3rd Century*, and that the Democracy Project is about to release a second, lengthier policy book, *Blueprints for America: Transition '89*. We can only conclude that Ledbetter is a self-hating policy wonk. *Marcus Raskin*
Chester Hartman

HARDLY SPORTING

Ithaca, N.Y.

Jim Ledbetter's criticism of our book, *Growth With Fairness*, along with some for the Institute for Policy Studies' *Winning America*, centers on the charge that "policy jocks" don't understand politics. We agree with the claim but deny the allegation. We are not policy jocks, nor would we characterize the authors of the essays in the I.P.S. volume that way. Our book was written by three political scientists who took time off from their own areas of academic specialization to contribute as informed citizens to a hoped-for public debate on the future of the United States. Contrary to Ledbetter's implication, we were not unmindful of the political processes by which ideas become policies; rather, we have a different understanding of the political situation facing progressive political forces in the United States today than does Ledbetter. While Ledbetter alleges that we "lack a sense of the importance of rhetoric," we do not share his view that rhetoric is the key missing ingredient in moving a progressive agenda from the pages of magazines such as *The Nation* to the White House.

Our view is that a progressive agenda must include a coherent and convincing analysis of the major problems confronting our society (and the world), a prescription for action, and a rhetoric that communicates this analysis and prescription both to the converted and the convertible. In order for this agenda to be converted through rhetoric and street heat into public policy, it must be organized into a form that is not only promotable but also defensible both ideologically and pragmatically. Taken one piece at a time, a progressive agenda is vulnerable to multifaceted assaults from the right. Only a broadly inclusive agenda that incorporates consistent and persuasive answers to difficult challenges has any hope of success.

Our view is that progressives already have a largely shared understanding of the centrality of our competitive economic decline to the deterioration of our economic and social life, to the stagnation that confronts a majority of our population and to the reality of poverty. The works of Bluestone and

Harrison, Kuttner and Reich make that plain enough. Further, our view is that progressives have available a set of gifted rhetoricians who are able successfully to link vision to language. We do not need to compete with the words or wisdom of Jackson, Hightower or Cuomo in presenting in gifted style the progressive message to America.

Rather, our view is that progressives lacked a coherent program, a core set of policies that would move in the direction of re-linking American growth with fairness. What *Growth With Fairness* does is demonstrate that a mix of extant and original proposals fit together in a coherent and pragmatic whole. Most important in this time of "deficit mania" when every proposal which will or might cost money is challenged with the query "How will you pay for it?" we have outlined a fiscal policy that embodies the only sensible approach to deficit reduction: a combination of increasing taxes progressively and redirecting our spending priorities away from duplicating and destabilizing weapons systems and subsidies for corporate farmers, and toward investments in the rebuilding of America's economic health and prosperity.

Ultimately, our aim was to present a program of action in sufficient detail that it could be recognized as a practical alternative to Reaganomics. In this way, we hoped to encourage and enable the Democratic Party to offer itself as a party prepared to govern, not just one prepared to serve as the loyal opposition. The failure of the Dukakis campaign to reach for a program like that outlined in *Growth With Fairness* accounts in large part for its inability to reach that broad popular coalition of forces ready, willing and able to move beyond the deceptions and the empty rhetoric of Reaganomics. That failure is not primarily in rhetoric but in the absence of a convincing alternative set of policies and programs.

Milton Esman
Steve Jackson

LEDBETTER REPLIES

New York City

My point remains the same: Policy books would be more effective if their editors paid more attention to readability and packaging of ideas. No more people read Heritage's *Mandate* than will read either of these books; the difference is that Ronald Reagan was able to convince enough people that there was a need for the kind of programs that *Mandate* contained. Until someone on the left begins to play a comparable role, the excellent ideas on the pages of these books will stay there.

James Ledbetter

The Nation welcomes letters — typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please.

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EDITORIALS.

S&L Time Bomb

“Assisted acquisitions” was the preferred label for the holiday spirit in the financial community. In the last days of 1988, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (F.H.L.B.B.) sold dozens of bankrupt savings and loan institutions. The buyers, often corporate raiders or real estate developers, promised to liquidate bad loans and run the S&Ls on a sound basis. In return, the board committed billions of taxpayer dollars to guaranteeing the investors’ profit margins. Just who is being assisted and who fleeced in the S&L roundelay is a major political issue for the new year.

The S&L debacle is many things. In legislative terms, it is the direct result of banking deregulation pushed by the Senate Banking Committee in the early 1980s. Before that, S&Ls were restricted to the essential but dull business of writing mortgages for homeowners. Deregulation allowed them to move into the commercial real estate and energy business—and the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (F.S.L.I.C.) was obliged to cover any losses. In effect, S&Ls were free to gamble with taxpayer dollars.

The S&L crisis is also the time bomb in the deficit debate. The estimates for making the savings and loan institutions, or thrifts, solvent are steadily creeping upward. The General Accounting Office recently put the figure at \$78 billion; most analysts now say that \$100 billion is more realistic.

That's \$4,000 for every person in the United States. The S&L crunch thus poses not only an immense challenge for economic planners but also new opportunities for activists working to restore health to the economy. As the issue evolves over the year, here are some things to watch.

The Gonzalez Hearings. Henry Gonzalez, new chair of the House Banking Committee, has promised to hold hearings on the broad problems of the American financial community. Gonzalez is a populist, albeit an erratic one. He may force investors like Robert Bass, the Texas financier who bought the largest bankrupt S&L, to testify. Bass received up to \$1.5 billion in Federal guarantees. Earlier this year, he made clear that he hoped to use the funds as seed money to engage in leveraged buy-outs. Will Gonzalez grill Bass about what he intends to do with the public's money?

"Off-budget" Funding. Danny Wall, the F.H.L.B.B. chair, told the *Washington Times* that he is pursuing "other off-budget sources of money" to solve the S&L crisis. But whatever the accounting legerdemain the money must come either from government borrowing (i.e., deficit) or from taxes.

The "off-budget" fiction has its psychological benefits. The cost of bailing out S&Ls contributed \$10 billion to the deficit in fiscal 1989. If the annual bill for the S&L cleanup remains that large, Congress and the executive branch will have a much more difficult time reaching the already elusive Gramm-Rudman targets, which could scare international investors away from the dollar. The result could be a falling dollar, rising interest rates and economic slowdown. "Off-budget" spending disguises the problem, which may be enough to prevent panic in the financial markets.

Paul Volcker, former chair of the Federal Reserve Board, suggested in late November that the Federal government spend \$50 billion on S&Ls, but indicated that the money should not be counted as increasing the deficit. "It probably should be on the budget, but treat it as special, so long as the trend [in Federal spending] then reverts back." Volcker conceded the obvious drawback of such fancy bookkeeping: Why should the S&L bailout be exempt from standard accounting procedures?

The Merger of the F.S.L.I.C. and the F.D.I.C. Right now, solvent S&Ls are paying high insurance premiums to the F.S.L.I.C. to help bail out their money-losing brothers. They want relief. Come August, the legislation that keeps thrifts from leaving the F.S.L.I.C. will expire. The solvent S&Ls will then be able to join the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The F.S.L.I.C., already broke, will then have even less money to pay off bad S&L loans. William Seidman, who heads the F.D.I.C., is resisting opening its rolls to the newcomers, fearful that the S&L crisis will spill over into the banking industry. Many bankers fear that Congress will stick the tab for the S&L bailout on the entire financial community. That's not a bad idea. Financial institutions benefited the most from deregulation. Why shouldn't they pay the bill for its failures?

The Northeastern Thrifts. Thus far most of the insolvent S&Ls are in the Southwest. But there are increasing signs that S&Ls in the Northeast face some of the same troubles, especially with their real estate investments. Throughout the

Northeast, property foreclosures and vacancy rates are up. Any kind of economic slowdown would squeeze thrifts there hard — and raise the \$100 billion S&L bailout tab even higher.

The Populist Response. A coalition called the Campaign for Financial Democracy will soon release an alternative report detailing progressive solutions to the S&L mess. The campaign includes the Association of Communities Organized for Reform Now (Acorn); BankWatch, Ralph Nader's monitoring group; and the Center for Community Change. They are working in Washington to prod the populist instincts of House Banking Committee chair Gonzalez and at the local level to intervene in S&L bailouts. In Little Rock, Arkansas, for example, the Acorn chapter is demanding that insolvent S&Ls, in return for Federal assistance, accept community representatives on their boards and make commitments to invest locally. Acorn organizers hope that this can become a model for other communities ravaged by the free-market freeloaders of the Reagan era.

Perhaps the most important question of the S&L crisis is whether populist solutions can work their way onto the Congressional agenda and restore a measure of prudence and responsibility to the nation's financial institutions.

Exalted Violence

The Catholic Church has accomplished by formal procedure what a Haitian military regime was unable to achieve through terror. Just before Christmas, the Salesian Order expelled Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's fiery liberation priest, alleging that his sermons "exalted violence and class struggle" and were not in keeping with his "priestly vocation." The expulsion, approved by the Vatican, effectively makes Aristide a priest without a parish and, of greater importance to the Haitian elite, without a pulpit. No priest can perform the sacraments in a church without the approval of the local bishop, and none of Haiti's ten bishops are likely to defy the Vatican by allowing Aristide access to a pulpit.

Last September the regime's paid killers attacked Aristide's church as he was saying Sunday mass and burned it to the ground. At least thirteen parishioners were killed and almost eighty wounded. Aristide escaped only by seconds. Then as now, he was deprived of a pulpit, though not of his priestly duties and institutional sanction. Not long after, when the Salesians ordered him to leave Haiti, thousands of people massed in the streets, preventing the move.

The destruction of Aristide's church sparked the coup d'état among progressive noncommissioned officers in the Haitian Army that brought Gen. Prosper Avril to power. In the weeks following the coup these *ti soldats*, or little soldiers, ousted numerous corrupt officers and helped villagers organize popular tribunals to judge abusive military men and government employees. But now Avril himself has sent in troops to prevent public demonstrations, and in the past few weeks has ordered the dismissal of progressive soldiers around the country, allowing many of the officers they purged to return to their posts. Thus, while

Aristide, the champion of Haiti's poor and voiceless, has been silenced, Avril has reaffirmed repression.

Aristide is appealing his expulsion but has little hope of success, despite the support of more than ninety Haitian priests who issued a strongly worded message criticizing the Salesians. Throughout Latin America the Vatican seeks to smother the liberating message of priests like Aristide. In doing so, it accentuates the schism in the church between a diminishing traditional wing and an expanding progressive one. More significant, it betrays its most energizing principles, and the people who have found therein the courage to demand a better life.

Bunker Mentality

I expected the worst on my return from Stockholm as part of a delegation of American Jewish leaders who negotiated with Yasir Arafat. But I was surprised. My mail has been 100 percent positive, as have the phone calls—save a single anonymous one. I have been on a number of open-mike talk shows, and many of the callers have said they were from Israel and added that they wholeheartedly agree that their nation should commence discussions with the Palestine Liberation Organization. No Israeli called to speak against that position.

Such a response is very encouraging, though there remains no shortage of opposition to direct dealings with the Palestinians. The most difficult talk-show caller was an American rabbi who labeled me a traitor to the Jewish people and demanded that I keep silent. Once again, the mantle of religion provided its practitioner with some special insight and the authority to determine who should and should not be allowed to speak. As became so painfully apparent during the recent argument in Israel over the Law of Return (i.e., who is a Jew), some Jewish religious leaders have trouble accepting democratic practices.

Even before I returned home to Los Angeles, one of the city's most eminent rabbis allowed himself to be used by a callow, ambitious candidate for the City Council who saw the usual campaign photo opportunity. The two called a press conference demanding my resignation as a Regent of the University of California. Somehow, they are allowed to speak on the Middle East but I am not; by their reasoning, the rabbi should have resigned from his congregation.

Critics insist that one should not negotiate with the enemy, or deal with the P.L.O. because it is a terrorist organization. These are not arguments, they are ploys to evoke knee-jerk emotional reactions, and usually succeed; they cover the real intent: never to give up land for peace.

How can you avoid negotiating with your enemy if your aim is peace? As for terrorists, the facile assertion that you should not deal with them is simply wrongheaded. The British discovered that by refusing for years to have anything to do with Jomo Kenyatta and his Mau Maus, who became the symbol of murderous terrorism in the Africa of the 1950s. When the British finally came to their senses and to the table and granted Kenya independence, the ter-

rorism ceased and Kenyatta became the elder statesman of East Africa. Roughly the same scenario is now being played out with Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

Some would like to see the Palestinians and those in the occupied territories "transferred," a euphemism for deportation, in the naïve belief that geographic removals will make the problem go away. Ever since statehood in 1948 I have been deeply concerned by the unthinking intransigence of the Israelis and their American Jewish supporters in dealing with what they earlier liked to call "the refugee problem." My concern has had a moral component, but equally important has been the question of Israel's security: Sooner or later, those hundreds of thousands, and then millions, of Palestinians would organize and threaten the heart and soul of Israel. In the 1960s the P.L.O. appeared, and now the *intifada*. Still, Israel's government and its American Jewish supporters appear to have learned nothing. "Transfer" is actually discussed openly in Israel these days, as if a people who have a deep commitment to a piece of land would simply crawl away whimpering if ordered from their homes.

Of the five of us who went to Stockholm, Menachem Rosensaft took the most heat. As president of the Labor Zionist Alliance, he was under pressure to resign from the outset—even before anyone could have known our purpose. Fortunately, he resisted that pressure and it has now abated somewhat. Even the American Jewish organizational leadership has moderated its reactions after first accusing us of being dupes. No doubt this tempering of opinion is due in part to loyalty to Secretary of State George Shultz, whose commitment to Israel is unwavering. And Shultz's denial of Arafat's visa application to speak to the United Nations in New York City solidified that loyalty. When the Secretary then called for an opening of a dialogue with the P.L.O., the American Jewish leaders could hardly refuse to go along.

Unanimity in complex political affairs is not necessarily a virtue. Under Talmudic jurisprudence, panels of judges served as juries and had twenty-three members. When a panel returned a unanimous verdict, the court was required by law to throw it out, on the ground that there must have been a predisposition or bias that precluded objective evaluation of the evidence. I was brought up to believe—and still do—that the Jewish people place the highest value on morality and education and the intellectual process. At a moment when the struggle in Israel is for survival, I fear that a bunker mentality is beginning to dominate and is eroding those values.

This phenomenon is attributable primarily to the Jewish leadership, with all its Byzantine organizational impositions. But the heartening evidence is that the rest of us—Jews and non-Jews alike—are increasingly wary of the unanimity of the hard-line judges and are open to all ideas that might help bring peace to the Middle East.

STANLEY K. SHEINBAUM

Stanley K. Sheinbaum is a board member of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East and was one of five American Jews who met with Yasir Arafat in Stockholm recently. He is also the publisher of New Perspectives Quarterly.

BEAT THE DEVIL.

Adieu

Soon Reagan will be gone from us, and mankind will have the rest of eternity to contemplate his legacy. Sometimes I feel twinges of premonitory nostalgia for the comatose old monster, but only because the Bush Administration will lack that crackle of madness that characterized the Reagan adventure, starting back in 1964 with the Goldwater convention. Producing his last bid for the history books, Reagan lingered on the threshold of the final dormitory to practice once more his martial arts on Libya. The fighter planes that shot down two Libyan MIGs may not have had provocation as their express mission but their regular "drills" outside Libyan territory and the presence of a carrier battle group offshore, as well as the barely veiled threat of military assault against the alleged chemical weapons plant, certainly had the same effect.

Somehow it seems that with Bush—and already I feel he has been in power so long that the nation is restive for change—we are resuming a story laid aside when Kennedy got shot and the nation headed into existential overdrive. With Bush the nation returns to Eisenhower-style tending by WASPs and Texans. The lay of the land is somewhat different, testament to the importance of the Reagan interlude in due care and maintenance of the interests of the overdogs.

Reagan superintended a major redistribution of income, out of the pockets of the bottom 80 percent and into the kennels of the grateful rich. If the deficit is maintained, and it's hard to see how Bush can do anything else, then this transfer, via interest income, will continue. Of course supply-siders could claim that under more orthodox management things would be infinitely worse, but their own pretensions, back in 1980, have hardly been realized.

Contrary to their rationale for cutting the taxes of the rich and the corporate, the growth rate of investment has declined, as have savings. The system, as my friend Robert Pollin of the U.C. Riverside economics department genially reminds me each time I call him up, has become more unstable and more dependent on debt (news that brings a flush of pleasure to the cheeks of left-Keynesians like another friend, Lynn Turgeon of Hofstra). Investment has gone into financial activities instead of real productive assets, perhaps for the good reason that within the present terms of the system the productive assets in prospect would not yield an adequate rate of return.

Capitalism Redivivus

All of that said, the system has exhibited a lot more staying power and vigor than any radical might have predicted in the late 1970s or even in the Reagan recession of 1982. Look across the globe: the Hungarians opening a stock exchange, Soviet economists and industrial managers turning to Thatcher, capitalism well on the way to restoration in Yugoslavia, Lech Walesa praising Thatcher one month before she closed the Sunderland shipyards, the Canadians sucked into Market Central, and the Third World . . .

Each time one looks the Third World is more heavily

chained in the gulag of debt peonage. Reagan was never able to achieve his dream of direct intervention in Nicaragua thanks to (a) the Sandinista armed forces; (b) the platoon sergeant who shot down Eugene Hasenfus's plane; and (c) the anti-intervention movement in this country. But let us not get carried away.

By the end of the 1970s someone of moderately sanguine temperament could look forward to the possibility of political advance throughout Central America. And now? El Salvador, an economic and ecological nightmare detained in its present agony by U.S. aid, recently ratified again by bipartisan consensus; Honduras and Costa Rica, descending into the abyss from their varying altitudes of economic well-being, rapidly in the former instance, more decorously in the latter; Guatemala, as depraved a tyranny as ever behind the fig leaf of Cerezo's regime and its criers such as Paul Reichler in Washington; Nicaragua, bled dry after six years of war and shattered by the hurricane.

What began with the coup in Guatemala of 1954 is now being frozen into a tundra of desolation that sometimes seems as irrecoverable as that of Central African political economies. There's still much pious lip service to the peace plan, rather in the way that when it came to the Middle East they used to talk about the peace process. As Tacitus made Calgacus say of the Romans in his speech to the Scottish levies at Mons Graupius in 84 A.D., "Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant." They make a desolation and they call it peace.

Of course when Reagan came to office predictions were dire: a firestorm of McCarthyism in the United States, roll-back in the Caribbean, including Cuba. There were vivid fears that Reagan would shamble into the Situation Room after high tea and press Button A. Because the fears were so colorful, it is easy now to scant the texture of the devastation. But the cutbacks in social programs will be exacting their toll in forty or fifty years, as the bodies of the malnourished children of today deteriorate prematurely. Familiarity with heartlessness has bred contempt, or at least indifference. To drive from the airports of New York or Los Angeles with eyes attuned for a couple of weeks to conditions in Western Europe is to see horror.

From the point of view of the Andean countries Reaganism did have a silver lining of a sort. In the North American metropole we had, gathering force from 1980 on, increasing economic misery and social disintegration at the bottom end of the social scale and a psychology of manic acquisition at the top, both of which fueled a desire for cocaine which, as part of a \$60 billion export business, shielded the Andean coca-growing countries from the afflictions of the isthmus, or indeed of Mexico.

Gorbachev broke the ideological icepack in his own country, but the present contours and specific gravity of the system overall scarcely encourage optimism about the end consequences of *perestroika*. This same system will have to get a real jolt before socialism can reconstitute itself and regain the initiative. But then, a chain is only as strong as its weak-

est link, as Lenin liked to say. Let's keep our eyes fixed firmly on trends in the Tokyo real estate market.

Light and Tunnel

Another part of the backdrop has been the steady worsening of what James O'Connor of U.C. Santa Cruz isolates as the conditions of production: beyond lowered wages (another successful project of the Reagan years), a degraded environment, toxic water, earth and air, dwindling protection against the impact of layoff or injury, services ravaged by an indifferent or actively malign state.

This terrestrial corruption is now evoked by the year-end cover photos of our planet, monument to ecological counter-revolution, the age's correlate of the pyramids or St. Peter's. In past phases of pell-mell pig-outs, and of depression too, there have been uplifting testaments to those *Zeits* and *Geists* set forth in stone. Sigrid Miller Pollin, Bob's wife, is an architect and I asked her what the future generations would regard as the lapidary glories of the 1980s.

The opinion formulated after due consultation with colleagues was that not much had been built on the North American mainland that could decently be called great. Top of the world list came British architect Norman Foster's Hong Kong Bank in the colony, which shows that good work can be done even with comrade *Zeit's* winged chariot hurrying near. On equal footing was Romaldo Giurgola's Parliament House in Canberra, finished in the year just departed.

No one seemed to have much sympathy for the post-modern surfaces of Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei, Sigrid rejecting the Houston and Manhattan skylines in favor of the Thorncrown Chapel done by E. Fay Jones in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, in the early 1980s. I managed to get Renzo Piano's Menil Collection building in Houston accepted, though it has to share billing with something I don't care for myself, Arata Isozaki's Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. I put in a low-key plea for the United Airlines terminal at O'Hare, but the word "derivative" cut it down. So there's not much here to rival the Nash terraces, or, at the point of production, the Rouge River plant. If I had to evoke *Z* and *G* in my own business I'd lead some guided tours round *The Wall Street Journal's* premises in the World Financial Center in Manhattan, done by César Pella, and the *Los Angeles Times's* Orange County headquarters, done by William Pereira, to show what the communications industry is about these days: vast mausolea in a style that would have made Speer glow.

Dog Bites Man

From the journalistic point of view we have the grim prospect of three years' worth of punditry about the unified European market in 1992. Already the beef war has been promoted from the scullery of the business pages to the smoking room of the Op-Eds. Conservatism is once more showing its resourcefulness in contrast to the etiolated prostration of the liberals, who can talk only about the deficit and

higher taxes. The Heritage Foundation shouts for relief of the debt burden for Latin America, and under Jack Kemp's guidance the Republicans will soon steal the homeless issue, by way of a fierce attack on rent control.

This is all very well but not much fun to read about. The Marion Barry cocaine imbroglio is almost the only thing that gets me to open the newspapers these days, and even here I've got mixed emotions. Barry seems a low-rent type, but anyone Richard Cohen is against I'm for, and that's all there is to it.

But even Barry's heroic efforts cannot dissipate the sense of tedium and letdown after Reagan years that brought us so many good things like Yellow Rain, the Pope Plot, the great Nuremberg carnivals of the Los Angeles Olympics and Liberty Weekend.

My colleague Ken Silverstein burrowed into the musty clips from the dawn of the era and discovered some early treasures. James Reston on November 9, 1980:

There is a good feeling here about the changing of the guard from Carter to Reagan. The Governor has been as cautious and courteous in victory as the President has been generous in defeat. Mr. Reagan has even been modest and occasionally funny—a combination that has been sorely missed around here since the days of Harry Truman.

And William Safire three days earlier:

Like a great soaking-wet shaggy dog, the Silent Majority—banished from the house during the Watergate storms—romped back into the nation's parlor this week and shook itself vigorously.

In the ensuing carnage, pollsters and pundits were plastered to the walls, the newly elected President was blessed and cursed with a mandate, and in the most revolutionary shock of all, the Senate of the United States was transformed into the world's greatest deliberately conservative body.

After eight years of fealty to this basic ideological po David Broder announced to the National Press Club, was giving him an award for lifetime service to some other, "I can't for the life of me fathom why any joi would want to become insiders, when it's so damn n to be outsiders—irreverent, inquisitive, incorrigi pendent outsiders, thumbing our nose at authori ing our way." This is the man who wrote on Nover "this display of backbone and muscle by Bush cr the heading of good news." The display in questi of Bush campaigning. There's something tou Broder's fathomless delusions about his own of the White House press corps over the pa Who says the press is cynical?

At the bottom line what we mostly read is instinct, otherwise known as ideological trai line, giving rise thereby to my favorite sport by Mark Heisler in the *Los Angeles Times* the Buffalo Bills beat the Houston Oil PARK, N.Y.—What Napoleon learned macho little general named Jerry Glanvi the steppes of the Niagara Frontier."

ALL- WAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ Profiting From AIDS

For years drug manufacturers and their ideological allies have griped that it takes too long to get a drug O.K.'d by the Food and Drug Administration. Then came AIDS. "Tragic as it is, the AIDS crisis of the 1980s offers a real opportunity for broad reform of the drug approval process," stated a recent editorial in *Regulation*, a leading mouthpiece for deregulators published by the American Enterprise Institute. The AIDS epidemic has led to a consensus that drugs intended to treat life-threatening diseases should be approved faster. Both Ralph Nader's Health Research Group and the Presidential Task Force on Regulatory Relief supported the F.D.A.'s recent decision to shorten the years-long approval process for such drugs.

But antiregulation advocates want to use AIDS to push even further. Lined up in their sights is the requirement that manufacturers must demonstrate "substantial evidence" that any new drug is effective. The problem, *Regulation* complains, is that this standard demands "excessive certainty that a drug will work before it is allowed on the market." In other words, drug companies are compelled to waste time making sure their products are better than placebos. In a regulatory game plan for the new Administration, Ronald Docksai, a vice president of Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, recently advised that to win support for a broader "regulatory overhaul" of the F.D.A., George Bush "should take advantage" of the AIDS crisis.

■ Made-in-Korea Conservatives

Last fall South Korea's National Assembly held hearings probe the financial dealings and other intrigues of former sident Chun Doo Hwan. Perhaps the most riveting witness was Chang Se Tong, onetime head of Korean intelligence. Much of his testimony concerned internal matters, but he also revealed a link between Korean intelligence and the Heritage Foundation. According to the newsletter of the North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea, Chang disclosed that the intelligence establishment made a \$2.2 million donation to the Heritage Foundation in the early 1980s. A document discovered by National Assembly members confirmed the amount.

Heritage opened its Asian Studies Center, which has quartered apologists for Chun's regime. Under Korean law, groups receiving major funding or policy advice from a foreign entity must register with the Justice Department. Heritage has not done so. Chang's testimony, set TV ratings records in Korea. Investigators from the Justice Department and Internal Revenue Service are now looking into the matter.

■ Washington

In D.C.'s land barons and the janitors who clean their office buildings spiffy escalated when the Justice Department issued a notice barring from their properties all those who obstruct the janitors' organizing effort. Since the

fall of 1987 the Justice for Janitors Campaign has tried to unionize the capital's 6,000 janitors—mostly women and virtually all black and Latino. The barons have resisted fiercely. Their latest bullying tactic, adopted a few months ago by about twenty building owners and managers (including the real estate firm of man-of-letters Mortimer Zuckerman), threatens union organizers and activist janitors with arrest for trespassing if they walk into any of more than 100 buildings, some of which house banks, stores, newspaper offices and law firms.

The owners have not yet tried to execute their order, though they have discussed its enforcement with the police. After Justice for Janitors filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, the developers had to revise the ban so as not to interfere with organizing activities protected under law. Still, the owners have reserved the right to ask for the arrest of anyone involved with Justice for Janitors who, for instance, enters a bank, hair salon or deli in one of their buildings. Justice for Janitors has challenged the ban in court as a gross violation of the D.C. Human Rights Act.

■ It's a Small Neocon World

The ideological warriors at the National Endowment for Democracy are moving full speed into the Bush era. Witness their plans for a "world conference of democratic activists." Scheduled to be held this May in Washington, the assembly will bring together the neocon jet set, according to an N.E.D. proposal obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. Needless to say, if you are an activist from the democratic left your invitation got lost in the mail.

The invitees include Hernando de Soto, the Peruvian economist who is Latin America's version of Charles Murray; Vladimir Bukovsky, the rabid anti-Soviet activist; Leszek Kolakowski, the Polish free-market philosopher and darling of Western Europe's New Right; and Octavio Paz, the Mexican guru of south-of-the-border neoconservatism. Even with the addition of less doctrinaire dissidents such as Milovan Djilas of Yugoslavia and Janos Kis of Hungary, the range of views debated will be narrow.

The conference will have as its lofty theme The Democratic Revolution. "At issue," the proposal reads, "is whether the non-utopian ideal of democracy can supersede the increasingly exhausted and discredited utopian ideologies that have . . . done such great harm during this century." In more mundane terms, the N.E.D. is stuck on the same stale question that obsesses neocons: Can hand-wringing capitalist democracies triumph over stagnant socialist societies? The proposal notes that the tiresome French theorist Jean François Revel, who has "written so pessimistically about the prospects for democracy, but whose own thinking may be changed by the advance of democracy," will be asked to speak on this subject. The group is overly optimistic. Revel has made his mark decrying the fall of democracy. Your tax dollars will underwrite his predictably gloomy pronouncements.

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tax priorities. This will surely require a new approach to fiscal policy, but it need not be one that panics before the buzzwords "debt" and "deficit." □

■ LETTER FROM TEXAS

Dumb Bankers, Mavericks Too

MOLLY IVINS

Austin, Texas

Cries of alarm are ringing through Washington city—"The Texans are coming! The Texans are upon us!" Journalistic brethren from the Northeast have called to inquire, "What does it all mean? Is there a Texas way of governing? Is there a Texas point of view?" You understand we are talking about a range of political Texans that runs from Henry B. Gonzalez, the ancient Chicano radical, who at 71 slugged hell out of some sumbitch who called him a Commie, to that trio of displaced preppies Jim Baker, Bob Mosbacher and Georgie Bush. If you insist on a comprehensive comment, a one-size-fits-all: What it means, folks, is a serious setback for vegetarianism. Where you find Texans, there shall ye also find meat-eaters. The only cultural advantage to being Texan is that we never have to apologize for being carnivorous.

I gather the nation's capital has yet to recover from the last time it was overrun by a horde of Visigoths from the Great State, led by the Horrible Head Hun, Lyndon Johnson. Fear not, Eastern effeters, none of these new guys is going to pull up his shirt and show you the scar from his gallbladder operation. But I guarantee we've sent you two citizens who will remind everyone where the word "maverick" comes from. (The first Texas Maverick was a rancher who refused to brand his cattle, so that if you found an unmarked cow in your herd, you knew it was a Maverick.) The two new Congressional committee chairs from Texas—Gonzalez and Jack Brooks—are as far from Bob Forehead as it's possible to get.

Wait till you see Brooks, the new head of the Judiciary Committee, in action. Come to think of it, you already have. He was the only guy on the Iran/*contra* committees last summer with any guts, remember? The one who kept trying to wade into *contra* drug smuggling and all that other stuff the good little boys had promised to stay away from. The thing about Brooks is that he just doesn't care, except about the Ninth Congressional District, where they think God. In the Ninth it is widely believed that Brooks has ly ordered Hurricane Gilbert to steer clear of Port Arthur—with powers greater than Robertson! Brooks does not give a damn and a col- seemly, proper, politic, not do gets hurt, making it look

Molly Ivins is

As for Henry B, he's been going his own road for so long no one could make him shape up. It's been chic to snicker a bit at Henry B in recent years—he's overweight, he has an accent and bad hair, he talks too much and believes too passionately in things that are not neo. But I notice Washington seldom snickers long at those with power. Some rainy afternoon, you should get someone who was there to tell you about the time in 1957 when Henry B. Gonzalez filibustered against the segregation bills in the Texas Legislature for thirty-six hours and two minutes. The charm of having Henry B as chair of the Banking Committee during the S&L catastrophe and what promises to be a spirited round of re-regulation is that Henry B understands two important things: Bankers all have hearts like caraway seeds, and bankers as a group are dumb. I am pleased to report that the phrase "dumb as a Dallas banker" has now made its way into the Texan language.

We are also pleased to announce the advent in Washington of a new Representative from the Panhandle of Texas, the Hon. Bill Sarpalius of Amarillo. "Sarp," as he was known in the Texas Senate, earned a reputation as a fella not exactly bent over double with intellect, no mean achievement in the context of that legislative body. Many laughed when Sarp announced for the Congress—they felt he had already exceeded his level of competence back when he was first elected an officer in the local chapter of Future Farmers of America. But a wonderful thing happened to Sarpalius right at the beginning of his Congressional campaign: One Saturday night last January, as Sarp stepped outside a local honky-tonk, an irate constituent slugged him and broke his jaw. Sarpalius went through the entire primary with his jaw wired shut, unable to speak, a stroke of luck you will be able to appreciate fully when you hear the man talk.

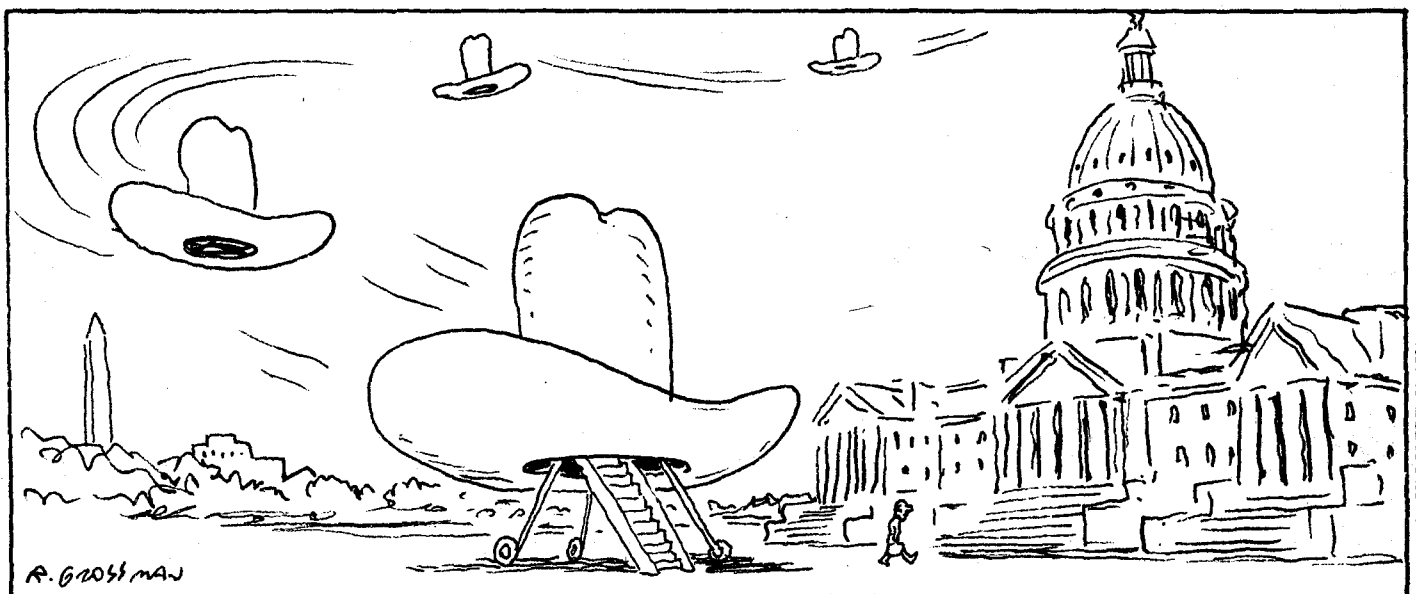
Also on the list of reasons to cheer the outcome of the November plebiscite was the defeat of Mac Sweeney, a coprolitic Representative from the Coastal Bend. Sweeney is sort of like Dan Quayle without the substance. His television commercials kept proclaiming, "In Washington, when you say the name 'Mac Sweeney,' people tell you, 'He works

for Texas.'" Actually, if you say "Mac Sweeney" in Washington, people laugh. Always nice to know Texans will not re-elect a terminal numbskull indefinitely.

Charlie Wilson, the East Texas Representative and hero of Afghanistan (recently lionized on *60 Minutes*, which was a refreshing change, since the last time *60 Minutes* paid any attention to Charlie it was on account of that unpleasant business about the cocaine), came up with a scheme to save Speaker Jim Wright from the nasty schemers who hauled him before the House Ethics Committee. Wilson suggests that no one should be allowed to serve on the House Ethics Committee who has not himself been investigated. He claims this would cut down on the hypocrisy and the sanctimony, would produce a committee of people who understand how much lawyers cost and who could recognize chickenshit when they see it. Wilson was himself on the Ethics Committee until it had to investigate him: He claims he got the seat by observing to Mo Udall, as he studied the list of the members, "Damn, there's not a sonofabitch on here who likes pussy or whiskey. They're not representative of the Democratic Caucus." Udall agreed and put Wilson on.

The State Legislature convenes in January, but we are trying not to think about it. William Clements Jr., our only Governor, gets meaner and more irrational by the day. We are under court order to fix the prisons, the mental hospitals and the schools for the mentally retarded. We also face an increase in enrollment in the public schools, a state work force that hasn't had a raise in years, Federal requirements to improve nursing homes, and more AIDS cases. But the real hitch in the getalong is a lawsuit that could force the state to equalize funding for public schools. In rich suburban districts there are heated towel racks in the high school locker rooms. In poor barrio districts they can't afford chalk or toilet paper. To get this Governor and this Legislature to raise taxes you have to hold a gun and a court order to their heads and be ready to use both. If there is any possible way to do nothin' about all of this, I fearlessly forecast that's what the Lege will do.

We used to be able to count on Mississippi bein' worse



than we are; near as we can tell, it's the only thing Mississippi's ever been good for. But last spring those 'Sippians went and elected a fellow called Baby Ray Mabus Governor, and he got there by running around the state saying to every crowd he could find, "I can't promise you we'll be Number One, but I promise you *we'll never be last again.*" The crowds took to chanting along with him, "WE'LL NEVER BE LAST AGAIN." Guess who that's gonna leave Numero Fifty-o? Our A.F.D.C. grant is still \$57 a month, per child.

Finest new member of the State Senate is Bill Haley, a funeral home director from Center. Last year some friends took Haley to eat at a swanky Austin restaurant. Faced with an absurdly pretentious wine steward, Haley, who is suspected of being more than mildly literate, became a complete naïf. The steward finally came around with a tray of after-dinner drinks. "How much is that kind, a glass?" inquired Haley.

"Zat, monsieur, is \$6 ze glass," replied the steward.

"Oh my," said Haley in wonder. "And that kind, how much is that a glass?"

"Zat, monsieur, is ze very best we have in ze house. Zat is \$25 a glass."

"Twenty-five dollars a glass!" squealed Haley. "Why, you wouldn't want to pee for a month, would you?"

Cultural notes from around the Great State: A citizen fed up with "lawyers running the country" has filed a \$1 billion class action lawsuit against the entire legal profession. Daniel Madison of Austin is suing the American Bar Association, the Texas Supreme Court, the University of Texas Law School and the Law School Council for violation of antitrust laws, claiming they conspire to keep power out of the hands of nonlawyers. "If you're rich, you can have all the justice you want, but if you're a working-class citizen, you may get little or none. That's the system in America and I intend to prove it," said Madison.

Proving once more that the legal profession is a disgrace, Texas lawyers passed up a chance to elect Oliver Heard president of the Bar Association. Heard was caught in a nude modeling studio during a police raid in the middle of his campaign for the state bar office. Heard claimed he just went into the place to use the bathroom, but came to electoral grief anyway.

Justice in Dallas was once again enlivened by that thought-

ful jurist, Judge Jack Hampton of State District Court. Hampton, a notorious hanging judge, explained in December that he had given a mere thirty years to a young thug who shot two unarmed men in cold blood because the victims were, after all, only "queers." This incident naturally reminds all serious students of country music of the old Lounge Lizards song, "I am goin' back to Dallas to see if there could be anything worse than losing you." □

■ THE B.L.S. NUMBERS GAME

Playing Down Unemployment

WILLIAM SERRIN

Homestead, Pennsylvania

Every month, the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics releases unemployment figures for the Pittsburgh area, of which this community—for decades America's most famous steel town—is a part. In October the jobless rate was 5.6 percent, representing 53,000 people. Such numbers are greeted warmly by many in the area, are seen as proof that Pittsburgh has thrown off its smoky, old-fashioned manufacturing image and stepped smartly into a more modern economy based on office work, service jobs and high technology. The national unemployment figures for November—5.4 percent, or 6.6 million workers—are also cheered. Economists, bankers, securities analysts and editorial writers say the statistics reflect a vibrant, innovative, job-providing economy.

However, thousands are not counted in the statistics that many are so giddy about. In fact, the monthly percentages of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (B.L.S.) are of little help in measuring the true unemployment and marginal employment that characterize so much of the U.S. economy. Indeed, the statistics actually mask unemployment and the related stress they were established to gauge. By conservative estimates, some 16.5 million people in the United States are unemployed and want to work, or work part time but want full-time jobs. That is an unemployment rate of nearly 14 percent, not 5.4 percent, as the B.L.S. would have us believe—and still other jobless people could be added in.

Those who have no jobs but have not looked for work in four weeks, believing they will be unable to find it, are not counted as unemployed by the B.L.S. These men and women are categorized as "discouraged workers." The bureau estimates that there are currently 930,000 such people nationwide. Others say they would like to work but are not seeking it because they lack child care or are ill or disabled. They form an even larger bloc not counted as unemployed—and there are 4 million such people, according to the B.L.S.

William Serrin reported on labor for The New York Times for several years, and is now writing a book on the collapse of the American steel industry.

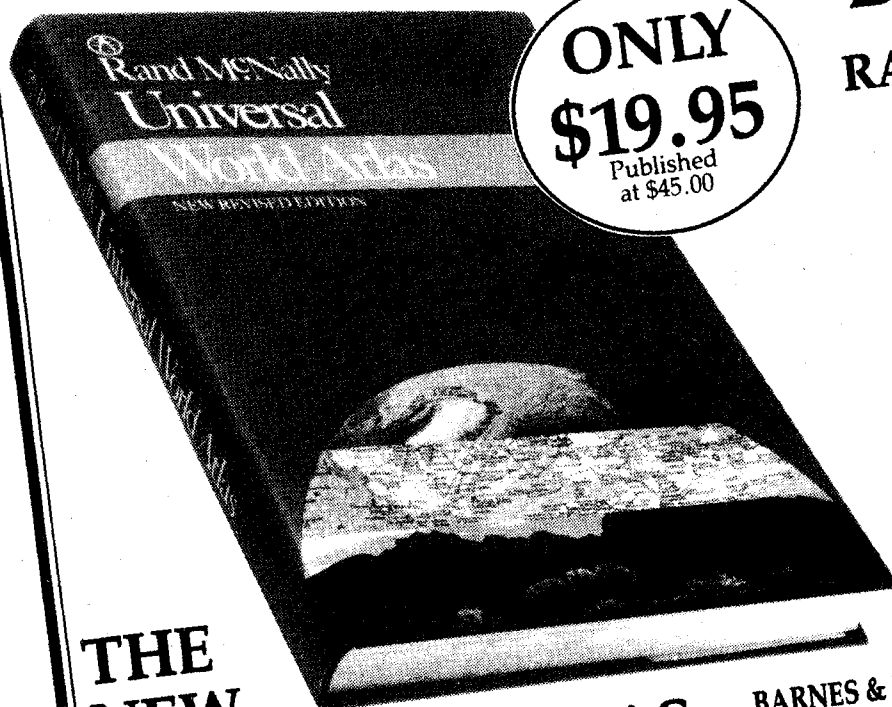
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Persons forced to retire early but who in many cases would have worked another ten or even twenty years are not counted either. Moreover, the B.L.S. regards even one hour of work a week as employment, thus giving millions of people only marginally employed—say, as a school crossing guard—the same status as full-time workers.

The B.L.S. says 5 million Americans now work part time because they cannot find full-time jobs. This category has risen sharply in recent years as employers have recognized that these “contingent workers” will often put up with lower wages, few or sometimes no benefits and flexibility of hours and assignments—in short, constitute a meeker work force. Nor do unemployment statistics reveal the thousands of people who have lost their jobs and found new ones at substantially lower wages and benefits.

The B.L.S. numbers also disguise the fact that the unemployed are not the same individuals year to year. In 1986, when the average annual unemployment rate was 6.2 percent, 14.3 percent of the labor force experienced unemployment; that is, 18.5 million people out of the 130 million employed, on average, during the year. Also, about two-thirds of the jobless are not currently receiving unemployment benefits. This is due, among other things, to tighter compensatory restrictions imposed by the Reagan Administration's effort to hold down unemployment costs.

The B.L.S., established in 1884, is an extremely conscientious, professional organization whose statistics are of considerable importance to journalists, government planners, economists and others. The bureau's U-7 rate, which does include discouraged workers and measurements of others seeking part-time and full-time work, depicts the extent of unemployment more accurately than the B.L.S.'s conventional count. But neither the bureau nor the press bothers

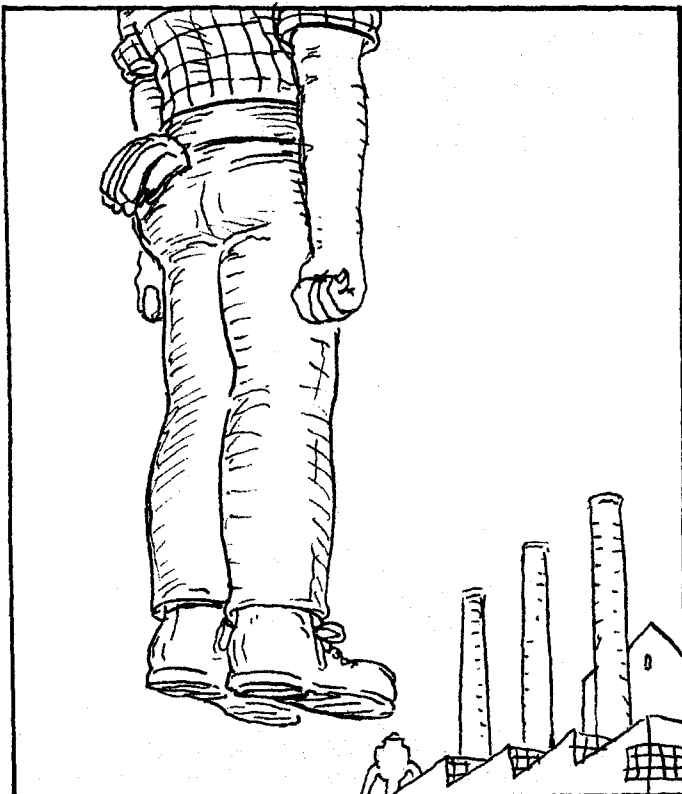
much with the U-7 figure, currently 8.4 percent. A bureau statistician says that the B.L.S. neither hides nor emphasizes the U-7 rate, and that it produces other, more conservatively defined—and thus lower—rates also given little attention. In the end, the press almost always takes the easy way out and uses the conventional numbers, a tendency historically encouraged by the government because it puts the best face on unemployment.

Many new jobs are in sales, offices, hotels, food preparation and other services. They are designed with teen-agers or relatively young women in mind. This new work force is much more tractable than one made up of older men, whom employers increasingly want nothing to do with—especially if they are industrial workers. Moreover, the new jobs are often in suburban or rural locations—on highway strips, in malls or new office complexes—far from the old industrial communities like this one or the inner cities where unemployment has soared.

Just how bad the numbers really are is indicated by the National Committee for Full Employment, a public interest organization in Washington, D.C., that each month issues what it calls a “real rate” of unemployment. This counts the unemployed as measured by the B.L.S. but adds in discouraged workers and part-time workers who want to work full-time. For November, this real rate was 10.2 percent, or 12.5 million people, almost double the B.L.S. figures. An even higher rate is calculated every three months by the Council on International and Public Affairs, a research group in New York City. It constructs a jobless rate that includes the B.L.S. unemployed base, the discouraged workers and all those who do not have a job but say they want one. Unlike the B.L.S., the council categorizes part-time work as just that. Last September, the council's jobless rate was 11.1 percent, or 13.1 million workers.

Here in the Monongahela Valley, USX, formerly United States Steel, which operated the Homestead Works and numerous other mills, has eliminated more than 30,000 jobs over the past ten years. Perhaps 10,000 electrical jobs have disappeared on top of this, along with others related to those basic industries. Last year, the University of Pittsburgh found in its State of the Region report that 125,000 men and women in the area faced unemployment problems. The study said 9,000 of them were out of work and could be classified as discouraged workers and 16,000 on welfare were employable but could not find work. An estimated 30,000 of the unemployed had been out of work more than fifteen weeks and 48,000 were working part time but wanted full-time employment. Some 22,000 had lost their jobs because of plant shutdowns but were working full time elsewhere, though at less than \$4.50 an hour, earning no more than half their previous pay.

A few former steelworkers in this area are getting by, but for most the chance for any kind of decent living has evaporated. Bob Schneider is only 50 years old. He draws \$1,200 a month in pension benefits, \$1,058 after deductions. He tends bar, when he can, at the American-Slovak Club in Munhall. His wife works as a secretary, and that helps. But



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he knows *he* is unlikely ever to see a regular paycheck again. For others, also uncounted, this reality no longer even matters: those who have died prematurely of heart attacks or other traumas—including suicide, like Rich Locher, who lost his job in 1986 and last year shot and killed himself, or David Sapos, who hung himself in the mill.

Meanwhile, the statistics keep coming from the B.L.S., every month. □

World Bank

(Continued From Front Cover)

protesting unsustainable cattle ranching and agricultural development in Polonoroeste and other projects in northwest Brazil partly financed by World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank loans. Over the past year and a half, local authorities and the banks have come to support the proposal of the rubber tappers to set aside protected rain forest areas, under their management, to be known as "extractive reserves." Mendes was gunned down December 22 by an assassin hired by several landowners and ranchers who rightly saw his victories as a threat to their interests.

Polonoroeste was one of several World Bank-financed development debacles targeted by environmental and indigenous groups in an unprecedented international effort to draw attention to the failings of the multilateral development banks. The "M.D.B. campaign," as it came to be known, led to front-page articles in *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. And two weeks before Conable's speech, on Easter Sunday, *60 Minutes* ran a scathing indictment of Polonoroeste, accusing the bank of contributing to the deforestation of a rain forest the size of Britain at a cost of nearly half a billion dollars—over the objections of its own technical staff.

The M.D.B. campaign also won influential bipartisan support from Congressional leaders like Representative David Obey and Senators Robert Kasten and Daniel Inouye. Pressure from environmental groups resulted in some twenty-four Congressional hearings, twelve of which were called specifically to investigate the ecological performance of the M.D.B.s. Thousands of pages of testimony documented the extent of environmental negligence by the banks and spurred Congress to enact legislation, beginning in late 1985, that required the U.S. executive directors of the banks to promote environmental reform and report back regularly on their progress.

The reforms that Conable announced in May 1987 closely reflected this pressure. He vowed to create a new, greatly expanded central environmental department and to establish environmental assessment units to monitor projects in each of the World Bank's four operating regions (Asia; Africa; Latin America and the Caribbean; Europe and the Middle East). Conable also promised funding for several environmentally beneficial programs, including a doubling in

forestry lending, and emphasized the need to collaborate more with various nongovernmental organizations.

Twenty months later, however, the gap is growing between the World Bank's environmental rhetoric and conditions in the field in some of its largest lending programs. This is especially true of two key areas that were to be monitored by the bank's new environmental department and regional environmental units: the equitable treatment of tribal populations and of those forcibly resettled by development projects. In India and Brazil, the bank's projects have helped create what Thayer Scudder, an anthropologist and World Bank consultant, terms "development refugees."

In some cases, the militancy of local people whose lives have been disrupted by bank-financed activities has reached the threshold of civil disorder. In early 1988, for example, massive demonstrations took place at two World Bank project sites in India. At the Singrauli thermal power plant, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, extensive air and water pollution and the forced displacement (without compensation) of 23,000 rural poor have created a situation that the Indian press compares to "the lower circles of Dante's *Inferno*." Indian nongovernmental groups had documented massive environmental and public health problems there for years and World Bank involvement spans a decade, but the bank refused to consider emergency remedial measures until late last year. Last February 5 an angry crowd of more than 15,000 marched through Singrauli castigating the bank and the state power company for what one Indian national magazine called a "continuing record of deliberate neglect and apathy." Only a few days earlier, on January 30, 4,000 people had staged a protest at the bank-financed Sardar Sarovar dam site in Gujarat state, against what they maintained were totally inadequate provisions for their resettlement and rehabilitation. Not until October did a special World Bank mission travel to India to meet with representatives of the displaced people of Singrauli and visit the sites of three other bank-funded thermal power plants, where tens of thousands of local inhabitants have been similarly uprooted.

A 1987 World Bank report leaked to the Brazilian press reveals that in Polonoroeste, where conditions continue to deteriorate, there has been systematic pillaging of Indian lands, widespread corruption and fraud in the Federal Indian Protection Agency, Funai, and "constant epidemics of tuberculosis, measles and malaria." The bank is preparing still another \$200 million agricultural loan for Polonoroeste, despite a letter the soon-to-be-assassinated Mendes sent to Conable last October warning of grave design flaws in the project. Elsewhere in Brazil, at the gigantic Carajas iron ore project, the bank has refused to heed international demands that it take steps to prevent massive deforestation. At Carajas, a proposed series of charcoal-fired pig iron smelters will buy ore from a bank-financed mine and transport it on a bank-financed railroad. The project risks destroying an expanse of tropical forest the size of Wisconsin and clearly violates the environmental conditions stipulated in the bank's loan agreement with the Brazilian state mining company.

Bruce Rich is senior attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund in Washington, D.C.

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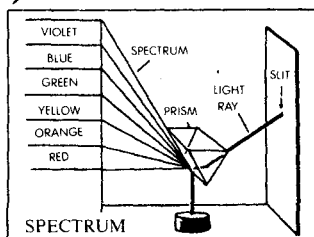
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The bank's failure to deliver on president Conable's 1987 promises is all the more embarrassing because it has been proclaiming its Green sympathies for a very long time—since 1970, to be exact, or two years before the landmark Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. In that year it created the post of environmental adviser, which was expanded three years later into an Office of Environmental Affairs. Yet until May 1987 the burden of reviewing the environmental impact of more than 300 new projects each year (as well as hundreds of ongoing projects) fell entirely on just three people, and the office had a staff of only seven. One solitary employee was available to review projects in agriculture, energy and transportation, which have accounted for more than half the bank's lending in recent years. Not until 1984 did the bank issue a comprehensive set of environmental policies and procedures to be followed.

Observers of the bank's awkward attempt to "Green" itself now fear that Conable's 1987 speech may have been the high point of the effort. It took more than a year to find a new director for the environmental department, and several early choices for the post turned it down. This was hardly surprising, given that the director must report to both a vice president and a senior vice president, neither of whom was known inside the bank for having strong environmental sympathies. David Hopper, the senior vice president in question, espoused a rather Kissingeresque approach in a 1987 British television interview, declaring, "Let's face it:

You can't have development without people getting hurt."

The size of the staff promised for the new department also shrank mystifyingly, from a hundred initially—the figure cited by Hopper the day after Conable's speech—to only twenty-three finally appointed. In addition to these, a total of twenty-two positions were authorized in the four regional environmental assessment units. Counting bodies is not a trivial exercise: Critics regard it as one of the few measurable indicators of the bank's commitment to improve its ecological performance. Yet the critics may have underestimated the degree to which a "reorganized" bureaucracy could hamstring the bank's environmental policies—no matter how many new employees were in place.

The effectiveness of the environmental policies is tied up with a basic dichotomy in the bank's structure, which the reorganization of 1987 appears only to have exacerbated. The environmental department was put under a new senior vice president to bring together the bank's policy and research work under a single umbrella. But the reorganization greatly strengthened the autonomy and power of the four regional vice presidents and the regional officials who manage bank projects on a day-to-day basis. The environmental department therefore often finds itself marginalized from the project staff in the field, and has little real impact on the bank's operations and lending priorities.

This dilemma is partly what the environmental assessment units were set up to counter. But they have been given neither a sufficient budget nor authority to assure essential ecological design changes in projects, except at the request of the project officers and country directors. And those officials have little incentive to make such requests, since environmental modifications would risk slowing down the processing of projects and loans. And it's that momentum, of course, not the environmental quality of a project, that advances careers.

Indeed, the World Bank's public commitment to ecological sustainability, which requires close monitoring of projects, seems to clash head-on with the much stronger imperative for operations personnel to increase the total volume of lending despite their reduced staffs. The bank's general capital increase will mean a doubling of its total lending capacity, and projected annual loan increases of 20 percent are foreseen for the next several years. This situation is made worse by the bank's confused effort to alleviate the debt crisis indirectly through an increasing number of "nonproject" structural adjustment and sectoral loans, granted in exchange for private sector and export-oriented macroeconomic reforms. But the record of World Bank-International Monetary Fund "adjustment" policies in the Third World since the Mexican debt crisis of 1982 is dismal. By steadfastly ignoring the need to forgive or at least write down the debt, adjustment loans have led to lower living standards and accelerated pressures to deplete nonrenewable natural resources. And they have brought poor countries to the brink of destitution and political chaos.

The bottom line is that the bank is still failing to implement its environmental guidelines or enforce environmental loan conditions in a significant number of important proj-

HELP BUILD A NEW HAITI

For five years, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a progressive Haitian priest, has been a target of his country's virulent repressive forces. On September 11, 1988, during a Sunday morning mass, his church in Port-au-Prince was burned, and at least thirteen of his parishioners killed. Soon after, Father Aristide was ordered by the Catholic Church to leave Haiti.

He has not left, and on December 15, the Salesian religious order of which Aristide is a member issued a directive expelling him from the order. Although he and other progressive priests and nuns in Haiti intend to fight the expulsion directive, Aristide is for the moment a priest without a pulpit.

In spite of increasing pressure from the new Haitian military government and the Church hierarchy, Aristide remains firm in his commitment to Haiti's poor and will not cease to speak out against repression and corruption. His organization for homeless youths, Lafanmi Selavi (The C'est La Vie Family), continues to provide shelter, food and vocational training for the young outcasts of Port-au-Prince.

Aristide and the people who support him are trying to raise funds today to keep on with this work, a task that grows more and more difficult with each step the regime and the Church take against them.

Please help us to support Aristide and his congregation in their important social work in Haiti. Make checks payable to Lafanmi Selavi (please write "American Friends of Father Aristide" in the memo space on your check) and mail them to The Nation, Box H, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

ects. Nor is there any sign of a change in lending priorities, even where economic good sense favors a shift toward more environmentally benign projects. In Brazil, for example, the bank is lending over \$1 billion to help finance a power-sector investment plan that will provide dozens of new dams in the Amazon region and elsewhere. The scheme will flood an area the size of Indiana, forcibly relocate up to half a million people and open up wilderness areas for migration and deforestation.

Yet a study commissioned by the bank in 1986 concluded that fully half of Brazil's projected new energy generating needs by the year 2000 could be handled by conservation and by greater efficiency from industrial consumers. The study estimated that the investment required would be less than \$10 billion—as opposed to \$44 billion for the new infrastructure. Yet as far as some of the World Bank's operations staff in Brazil were concerned, the study might as well have been prepared on the moon.

One of the principal—if unstated—goals of the bank's loans to Brazil's power sector has been to provide foreign exchange to help the Brazilian government service its debt. In fact, the minutes of a 1986 World Bank executive board meeting that approved a \$500 million power-sector loan quote an unnamed bank director as remarking that “the project oozed of balance-of-payments support.” (Of the \$500 million, just \$1 million was allocated to energy conservation.) But the net result of loans like these will be to increase Brazil's foreign debt by more than \$1 billion and finance a power investment plan whose consequences will be not only gross economic waste but tragic ecological destruction that could have been avoided.

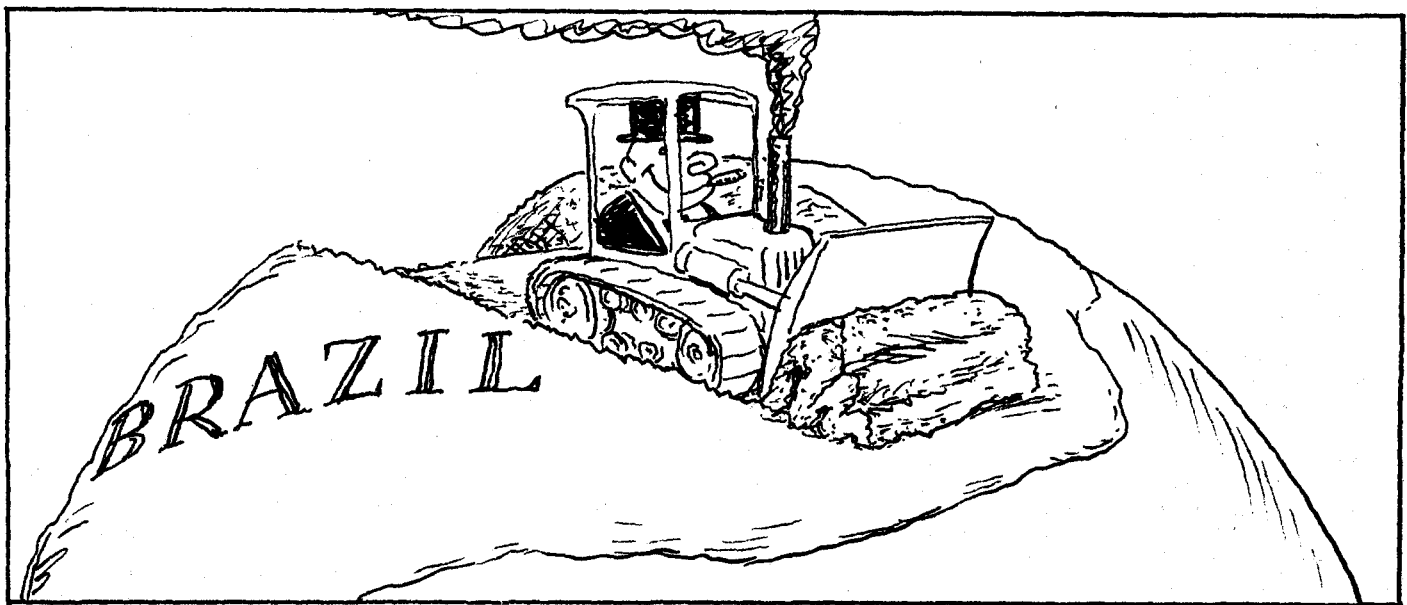
The controversy over the World Bank's environmental record is linked to the fundamental issue of public accountability—both to taxpayers in the industrialized donor countries and to those whose lives are directly affected by bank projects. Accountability, in turn, is inseparable from the question of public access to information on its projects, which the bank jealously restricts. Without that, no informed discussion of alternatives is possible. Pressure is

now building for a kind of *glasnost* in the bank: Congress has already passed legislation enjoining the U.S. executive directors of M.D.B.s to promote the informed participation of local populations affected by their development projects. Last spring the World Bank's senior vice president for operations, Moeen Qureshi, declared that improving the environmental quality and economic equity of bank projects was linked to more involvement with nongovernmental grass-roots organizations.

Despite the sorry record of ecological havoc and bureaucratic intransigence, many of the changes in the World Bank over the past year could, with official encouragement, bring lasting benefits. An expanded environmental staff is in place and could be made more effective. A \$100 million loan now in the pipeline will support national environmental institutions in Brazil, and the power-sector loans, though geared to a flawed investment plan, do provide for environmental assessment units in Brazil's regional electric utilities. Individual operations staffs, acting on their own initiative, have provided for environmental safeguards in a number of projects in Asia and Africa. Belatedly, it appears that the bank is at last planning to rehabilitate and resettle those displaced by its thermal power projects in India.

The commitment from the top, at least from Conable and Qureshi, appears to be sincere, if increasingly subverted by the bank bureaucracy's special talent for camouflaging unchanged behavior in the newest development doublespeak. The latest example of this is the slogan “sustainable development,” which is recited like a mantra in Washington and M.D.B. circles.

Meanwhile, the environmentalist M.B.D. campaign is gaining support in other countries, particularly those of northern Europe. Nongovernmental organizations are determined to make the World Bank match its escalating ecological rhetoric with deeds. Hundreds of millions of people in the developing world will depend on the conservation of forests and other natural resources for their survival. The murder of Chico Mendes is only the latest reminder that this is a struggle of life and death. □



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Anita Baker: Rapture • Sweet Love, Caught Up In The Rapture, You Bring Me Joy, Been So Long, Mystery, more. Elektra 173404

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Guns N' Roses: Appetite For Destruction Welcome To The Jungle, Sweet Child O' Mine, It's So Easy, more. Geffen 170348

Jerry Lee Lewis: Original Sun Greatest Hits • Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin On, Great Balls Of Fire, more. Rhino 154118

Kitaro: The Light Of The Spirit • Sundance, Mysterious Encounter, The Field, In The Beginning, etc. Geffen DIGITAL 164228

Richard Marx • Endless Summer Nights, Should've Known Better, Don't Mean Nothing, etc. EMI-Manhattan 134073

Jimmy Page: Outrider • Wasting My Time, The Only One, Prison Blues, more. Geffen 123721

Robert Plant: Now And Zen • Dance On My Own, Heaven Knows, Tall Cool One, Ship Of Fools, etc. Es Paranza 134392

Led Zeppelin: Houses Of The Holy D'yer Maker, Over The Hills And Far Away, etc. Atlantic 134321

George Harrison: Cloud Nine • Title song, I Got My Mind Set On You, When We Was Fab, more. Warner/Dark Horse 174328



Phil Collins: Buster 100517

James Taylor's Greatest Hits Warner Bros. 123790

Dire Straits: Brothers In Arms • Money For Nothing, Walk Of Life, So Far Away, more. Warner Bros. DIGITAL 114734

Pops In Space • John Williams & The Boston Pops. Music from Close Encounters, Star Wars, others. Philips DIGITAL 105392

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Cream: Disraeli Gears • Sunshine Of Your Love, more. Polydor 104898

Simon & Garfunkel: The Concert In Central Park • Mrs. Robinson, Bridge Over Troubled Water, etc. Warner Bros. 244006

Alabama: Live RCA 160027

Previn: Gershwin • Rhapsody In Blue, Concerto In F, more. Philips DIGITAL 115437

Eagles Greatest Hits, Vol. 1 Asylum 123481

Keith Richards: Talk Is Cheap • Big Enough, How I Wish, Take It So Hard, Struggle, I Could Have Stood You Up, more. Virgin 100518



Steve Winwood: Roll With It 154633

Liz Story: Speechless • Forgiveness, Speechless, Welcome Home, Back Porch, Vigil, Frog Park, more. RCA/Novus 100494

Decade/Best Of Steely Dan MCA 154135

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Jethro Tull: Aqualung Chrysalis 124705

Whitney Houston: Whitney • I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me), Didn't We Almost Have It All, more. Arista 152854

Metallica: ...And Justice For All • One, Blackened, title song, To Live Is To Die, Shortest Straw, more. Elektra 200478

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Dwight Yoakam: Buenas Noches From A Lonely Room • Title Song, Streets Of Bakersfield (with Buck Owens), more. Reprise 100009

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Tangerine Dream: Phaedra 100510

Steve Winwood: Chronicles • Higher Love, Valerie, While You See A Chance, My Love's Leavin', Talking Back To The Night, more. Island 134501

Pictures At An Exhibition, Night On The Bare Mountain, more • Montreal Symphony/Dutoit. London DIGITAL 125314

Whitesnake • Here I Go Again, Still Of The Night, Give Me All Your Love, Crying In The Rain, Bad Boys, more. Geffen 163629

ZZ Top: Afterburner Warner Bros. 164042

Carly Simon: Greatest Hits Live Anticipation, You're So Vain, Coming Around Again, Nobody Does It Better, etc. Arista 154537

Huey Lewis: Small World • Perfect World, Walking With The Kid, World To Me, Better Be True, Old Antone's, etc. Chrysalis 134347



Horowitz Plays Mozart 115436

Najee: Day By Day • Personality, title song, That's The Way Of The World, Tonight I'm Yours, Gina, Najee's Nasty Groove, etc. EMI-Manhattan 100001

Genesis: Invisible Touch • Land Of Confusion, title song, etc. Atlantic 153740

More Dirty Dancing • Do You Love Me, Love Man, Big Girls Don't Cry, Wipeout, Some Kind Of Wonderful, Cry To Me, more. RCA 130766

The Who's Greatest Hits MCA 164160

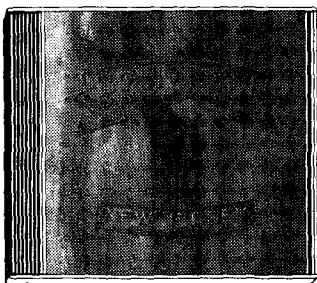
Tchaikovsky, 1812 Overture; Romeo & Juliet; Nutcracker Suite • Chicago Symphony/Solti. London DIGITAL 125179

James Galway: Greatest Hits RCA 173233

The Moody Blues: Sur La Mer • I Know You're Out There Somewhere, No More Lies, Here Comes The Weekend, Vintage Wine, etc. Polydor 124546

The Beach Boys: Endless Summer California Girls, Help Me Rhonda, Surfer Girl, more. Capitol 223559

Cinderella: Long Cold Winter • Gypsy Road, Don't Know What You Got (Till It's Gone), The Last Mile, etc. Mercury 114780



Bon Jovi: New Jersey 100516

Strauss, Also sprach Zarathustra Chicago Symphony Orchestra/Reiner. RCA 163627

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Raffi: Singable Songs For The Very Young Shoreline 144494

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Elton John: Greatest Hits, Vol. 1 MCA 163322

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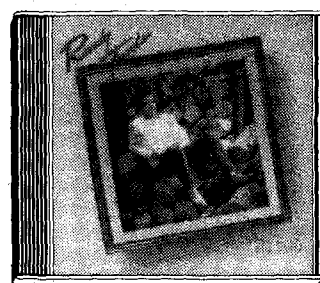
Parton/Ronstadt/Harris: Trio • To Know Him Is To Love Him, etc. Warner Bros. 114804

Chicago 19 • I Don't Wanna Live Without Your Love, Heart In Pieces, etc. Reprise 154404

Peter Cetera: One More Story • One Good Woman, more. Warner Bros. 100463

Buckwheat Zydeco: Taking It Home Why Does Love Got To Be So Sad? (with Eric Clapton), Creole Country, more. Island 100597

The Sound Of Music/Orig. Soundtrack RCA 100046



Randy Travis: Old 8x10 100008

The Police: Every Breath You Take-The Singles • Don't Stand So Close To Me ('86), Roxanne, etc. A&M 173924

Sting: Nothing Like The Sun • We'll Be Together, They Dance Alone, Be Still My Beating Heart, more. A&M 273965

Mozart, Overtures • Academy of St. Martin/Marriner. Marriage Of Figaro, 8 more. Angel DIGITAL 134267

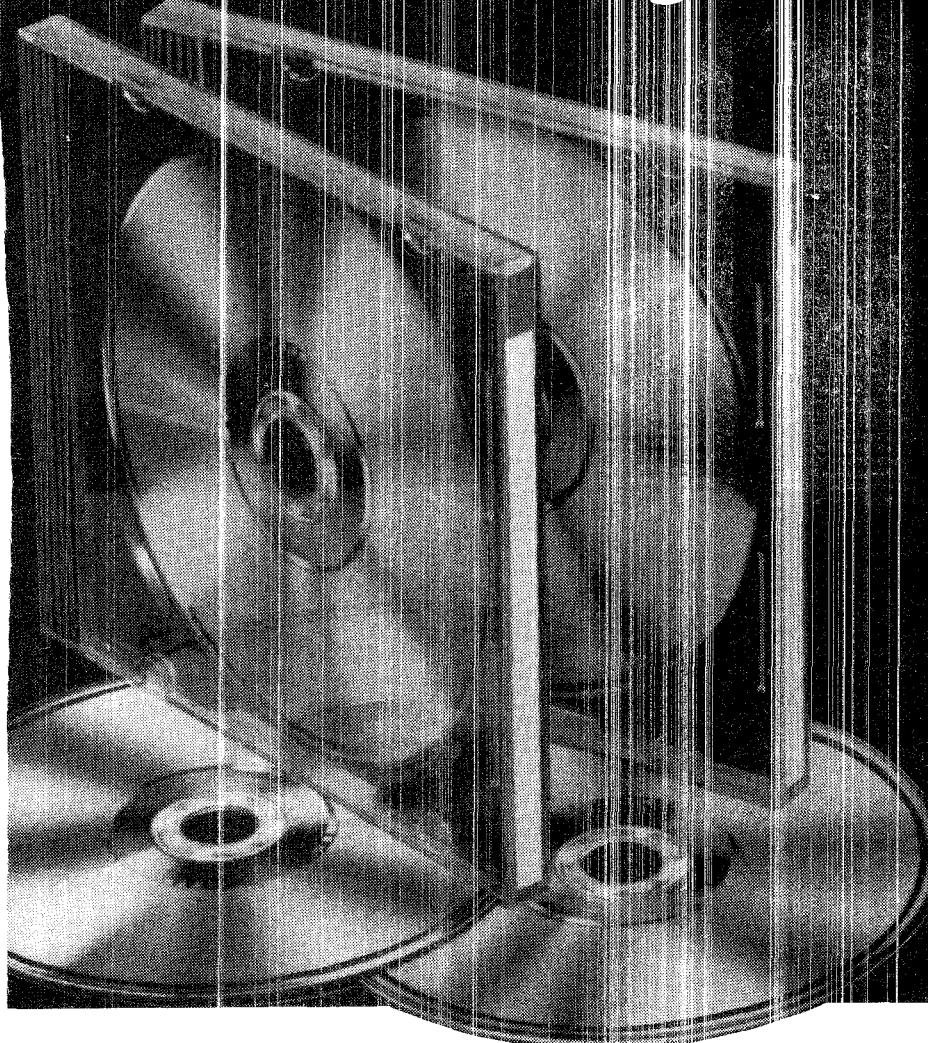
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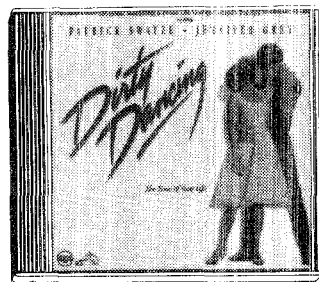
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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Intellectuals and Reform

ALFRED J. RIEBER

THE THINKING REED: Intellectuals and the Soviet State From 1917 to the Present. By Boris Kagarlitsky. Translated by Brian Pearce. Verso. 374 pp. \$29.95.

To believe the media pundits and many Sovietologists you would think that the current changes taking place in the Soviet Union are largely cosmetic, unprecedented and wholly dependent upon one man. On the occasion of every announcement of a new reform, the doubters stubbornly repeat their dire warnings that this is either deceit or illusion. Many experts are too worried about their reputations as tough-minded realists to understand that the changes taking place in the Soviet Union are really structural, linked to a tradition and inscribed in the society. Boris Kagarlitsky's new book is a good antidote to this mindless skepticism, even though it is not as strong in this respect as one might wish.

Perestroika is not a new idea in Russian history. It is deeply embedded in a dynamic tradition of reform that stretches back to the predecessors of Peter the Great. Reform has alternated with bursts of revolutionary violence and longer periods of stagnation or repression, and it would be a mistake to follow the conventional monolithic interpretation of Russian history and assume that one of these three powerful currents in Russian political culture has always dominated the other two. Such interpretations have always left us unprepared for what happens next. Witness the surprise followed by confusion and skepticism that greeted the Gorbachev phenomenon.

The important thing about Soviet reform is that, like revolution and repression, it does not repeat itself either as tragedy or farce; nor does it illustrate that old saw of "plus ça change plus c'est la même chose." To understand Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* is both to distinguish between past and present conditions and to perceive the persistent pressures for change. Throughout Russian history reform—that is, the radical reconstruc-

tion of the state and society without destroying the reigning political order, even at the expense of tampering with its socioeconomic foundations—has exhibited a number of disarmingly similar characteristics.

To begin with, the impulse to reform invariably came not from below but from the very top of the ruling elite and bureaucracy. Most often it was a response to a systemic crisis that threatened the stability and even the survival of the body politic. Sometimes the danger was imminent and direct, as in the case of military defeat in the Crimean War or the crumbling of the social structure in the Russian Civil War. More frequently it involved broader issues of relative economic or technological backwardness. In either case what was at stake was Russia's standing as a great power.

The current crop of bureaucratic reformers, unlike their predecessors, enjoy direct access to and broad support from the mass of the population. In the past peasant Russia, sullen, suspicious and clinging to the old ways, regarded intervention from above as the devil's seed. In a way they were right. Up to the mid-twentieth century the goal of reforms was to reshape the lives of the peasants in order to funnel greater resources into the state coffers. It was not an easy task because the peasants, despite popular mythology, were never passive. They protected their own interests as they saw them. When necessary they resorted to all kinds of evasions and resistance that baffled and frustrated the reformers, who thought they knew best. Today for the first time in Russian history the peasant is not the source of the opposition. They are not even the main object of reform. The Soviet Union is no longer an agrarian society. Today, reform from above is more likely to engender support from below among the majority of a literate, urbanized population.

In the past reforms, which were launched without a clear plan or even a list of priorities, almost immediately encountered opposition within the elites. These internal challenges usually led to prolonged and bitter political struggles: Peter was opposed by elements of the church hierarchy and his son; Alexander II faced a noble *Fronde* and bureaucratic resistance; Witte and Stolypin battled

their own ministerial colleagues; Lenin's New Economic Policy was challenged by party factions on the left and Stalin's incipient centralizing tendencies on the right. Such intragovernmental or bureaucratic struggles spilled into the public arena, particularly after the growth of a mass circulation press in the mid-nineteenth century. The bureaucratic interests ran their own press campaigns or else leaked information to organs that sympathized with their position.

In the course of these struggles the reformers learned, if they did not already know, that they could not confine their structural tinkering to one wing of the state edifice. The reforms gathered their own momentum, accelerated by autonomous groups within the bureaucracy and society who, once freed from the constraints of police and censorship, veered off in unpredictable directions, spurred by fresh ideals or personal ambition. The initial objectives of the reformers, most often economic (emancipating the serfs, launching an industrial revolution under Witte, consolidating privately owned farms under Stolypin, creating a mixed economy under the N.E.P.), rapidly multiplied, spreading to social and cultural issues and finally, almost irresistibly, to the inner fortress of the reformers themselves: politics. What was ultimately involved was nothing less than political participation, the constitutional form of a multicultural state and the conduct of foreign policy.

In all these cases the internal struggle became something more than the stubborn defense of bureaucratic timeservers against the enlightened champions of reform. Opposition began to surface under the more traditional ideological slogans: There was resistance to the breakdown of public order and terrible fear of the people's wrath—the elemental outbreak of violence (*buntarstvo*) and other modern versions of mass anarchy; dread of national liberation movements within the multicultural society; the threat of breakaways in the western borderlands; and even the dissolution of the state. These were not phantoms of the remote past. The Polish revolt of 1863, the massive risings throughout the western borderlands in 1905 where the fiercest fighting of that revolutionary year took place, the successful and unsuccessful secessionist movements during the Russian Civil War and the widespread defections to the Germans in 1941-42 of

Alfred J. Rieber teaches history at the University of Pennsylvania and is writing a book on "the cold war as civil war."

anti-Soviet elements in the Baltic, Ukraine, Crimea and North Caucasus, and their cruel legacy of Stalinist deportations which haunt the regime to the present day—all were stark reminders of the potential instability of the borderlands.

Today Gorbachev's encouragement of *glasnost* and economic initiative has stimulated more vigorous social movements in the Baltic states and the Caucasian republics than in the Russian core. This has aroused the hostility of Great Russia nationalists who accuse the reformers of jeopardizing the Union. What is different today is the absence so far of any foreign support for secession and a greater degree of economic and political integration of the borderlands into Soviet society. Estonia's claim for autonomy is exceptional and will remain so if Gorbachev can hold in check the Russian chauvinists whose influence Lenin feared and deplored seventy-five years ago.

The intelligentsia, as defined and brilliantly represented by Boris Kagarlitsky, has always been intimately involved with reform. Yet its position was, as it is today, ambiguous. Its most radical representatives wanted nothing less than the surrender of the state to their demands. But the ruling elite shrewdly wooed and won over some of its most vocal critics; it catapulted them from obscurity, exile and arrest to positions of public prominence. This transformation raised a troublesome question, at least troublesome for Russians, however academic it may appear to us: Does a critically thinking individual cease to be a member of the intelligentsia once he or she serves the state? It is a question of sincerity and trust.

Today, for the poet Yevtushenko the answer might be yes; for the scientist Sakharov, probably no. So we are forced back on the endlessly debated questions of the nineteenth century: What is the intelligentsia? Who are the *intelligenty*? They have eluded precise definition, wandering on the fringes of sociological categories, cultural attitudes and ideological commitments. Most Russians claim to "know one when they see one." It is a charming evasion. At one point in his book, Kagarlitsky defines the intelligentsia as the polar opposite of *meshchanstvo*, that blend of mediocrity and vulgarity with an occasional dash of brutality best captured in Chekhov's plays and stories. Kagarlitsky's particular image is borrowed from the Soviet writer David Granin's embodiment of "talent" in Pushkin and "mediocrity" in his contem-

porary Faddei Bulgarin, a journalist cum police stoolie. The dualism is familiar to any student of nineteenth-century Russian literature and culture; it too is evocative but not very helpful analytically.

Fortunately, Kagarlitsky is a sociologist, and he also sketches for us the outlines of the new social relations arising between the state and society in the Soviet Union, although even here he cannot resist the *intelligent's* fascination with high culture. Still, Kagarlitsky's optimism that things are after all different now from what they were in Pushkin's time springs from his belief that the in-

telligentsia has acquired greater weight in Soviet society. It is no longer merely "Pascal's thinking reed," morally superior to the *meshchanstvo* but politically powerless. Now it has access to a working class that is emerging as an active force. Unfortunately, the author does not provide much evidence of this new proletarian vitality. But he rekindles "the spark" as Pushkin would have it; the intelligentsia has found an audience, an audience that he hopes will respond to the summons—this time to reform, not revolution.

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as this alliance may appear to us, it omits one vital factor — the state — which the author thinks important enough to include in the subtitle of his book. This brings us back to the paradox of bureaucratic reform. Many of the ideas for *pe-restroika* came from the intelligentsia, whether we accept the bland official definition of anyone with higher education or the more subjective one used by Kagarlitsky (and his intellectual forebears) of talented and morally superior thinkers. But the initiative, direction and possibly the fate of the reforms does not so much depend upon the intelligentsia as on the power brokers. The intelligentsia — or its most critical wing represented, for example, by Sakharov — stands courageously as the conscience of reform, as it once did of revolution. But it is only part of the political struggle. Its traditions do not explain where the bureaucratic reformers, the Yakovlevs, the Yeltsins and of course Gorbachev himself came from, nor where they will take things. Herein lies a danger that has always dogged the heels of the reformers in Russia.

There are bound to be contradictions and clashes between the intelligentsia, which considers itself a moral force, and the bureaucratic reformers, who are practical politicians. Yet each needs the other. The bureaucratic reformers need the intelligentsia's support to expose and attack the apathy, inertia and corruption of the bureaucratic timeservers and to awaken the mass of the population to the need for protest. The state apparatus will even, as it has in the past, allow the critically thinking intelligentsia to penetrate its own ranks. And like the intelligentsia (still Kagarlitsky's definition) the

state seeks to bring the masses into some form of political participation, reviving certain aspects of Lenin's concept of the importance of the soviets and a genuine federation of socialist republics — in a word, of ending the isolation of the state from society, closing the gap between "them" and "us," as the Russians define their relations with the state. But the leadership still rules under the shadow of a persistent paradox: Reform may require a concentration of power in the hands of the reformers, enhancing the power of the state over the population as the only means of overcoming the resistance to reform which is lodged in the state bureaucracy and the most privileged strata of the party. What Gorbachev appears to be moving toward is a kind of political N.E.P.: The "commanding heights" of political power will remain with the party or even himself, while local initiative and a degree of federal autonomy backed by a vigorous and free press will keep everyone honest. Kagarlitsky, a democratic socialist, looks to the Prague Spring, but the Soviet Union is not Czechoslovakia.

The critical questions remain whether the Soviet intelligentsia will be willing to play a political role that still denies them the ultimate prize — power — and whether the bureaucracy will endure constant and often withering criticism without moving to limit or silence it. In the final analysis, Kagarlitsky is right: The balance lies with the mass of the urban population. But their mood and attitudes still remain difficult to fathom, for up to now the bureaucrats and the intelligentsia have claimed to speak for them without having gained their prior

BETTER NONE

The storm passed like a fever. Now the residual snow fits across Monadnock, a specific abyss: down the Asheolot Valley

to the river's roots, tucks under the ice at the rim of the reservoir and pulls taut. Strange, that no pine or hawk or printing animal has punctured it,

through a night and a day and a night. I respect its blank precision. By the end a man I loved also insisted on dying.

Alone in his body, he insisted. Even the snow is warmer than that rage, that blank page. Now not

even if I had the power. How could I choose pain for him, to keep the dead alive a little? Better none

than an elegy fed on grief like that, constantly changing, constantly freshened and greedy.

Stephen Tapscott

approval or consent. It is not at all clear what they will say or whom they will follow when they find their own voice. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Courbet

The glens and glades of Gustave Courbet are afflicted with an aggravated nymphlessness. His rocks and rills are goddess-free. No angels hover by when honest folk are buried at Ornans. "I am above all a total realist," he confessed on one of many proclamatory occasions. This meant in part a negative ontology—nothing was to be dreamt onto his canvases that had not first struck the unbamboozled eye of the painter—and in part an artistic agenda: to depict real people and real animals doing real things in real places. He planted enough forensic clues that scholars have been able to nail down the identity of most of the individuals he depicted, and, on the basis of topographical evidence, most of the sites in which he showed them. Yet neither our understanding nor our appreciation of his works depends especially on the particularities of local reference. Times and modes of dress have changed, as well as modes of cultivating the earth or ministering to the domestic needs of families; but in some way not altogether accommodated to the reductive ideologies of artistic realism, his paintings at their finest touch us in our basic dimension as human beings. "To be not only a painter but a man, in a word to make *de l'art vivant*—such is my goal." So he wrote in the manifesto attached to the catalogue of his notorious exhibition of 1855 in the Pavillon du Réalisme.

In that manifesto, he speaks of realism as a kind of flag that he and his chums, Champfleury and Max Buchon, had raised in 1846, in an effort to "arouse the forces proper to mankind" against what he terms "the ideal of the conventional." (In a later text he said that "Realism" was a label imposed upon him the way "Romantic" had been imposed upon his predecessors.) The contrast between realist and conventional art is philosophically exact. The moment you undertake to paint things you have never seen or, worse, which are unseeable because inexistent—nymphs, goddesses, angels—you are obliged to fall

back on a body of received conventions, and hence enlist less the visual capacities of your viewers than their ability to read signs: You have produced a work more appropriately classed literary than painterly. The art of the Greeks, since it dealt with monsters or with deities, was no less conventional for being naturalistic—no less conventional than the fierce effigies of primitive artists, which are not naturalistic by any criterion. Thus naturalism is but a style and, when conventionalized as it must be when it undertakes to show what is not, it requires that the viewer learn how to read the signs the painter is forced to employ: saints by halos, martyrs by attributes and angels by wings. Courbet's men and women are vehemently human, with signs of weariness in their faces, with hair beneath their arms or between their legs and with the kind of heavy flesh with which the hams and cheeses of his native Savoy festoon the sturdy bones of its hard-working people.

Courbet's contemporaries found his work hilarious. I once came across a book with nothing in it but caricatures of him and his works. Cartoonists pretended that his paintings were realistic to the point of crossing the boundaries between the senses, so that one had to hold one's nose in order not to be overcome by the stink of unwashed bodies. Each of the famous paintings generated whole portfolios of spoofs, a good many of which called into question (not always groundlessly) his ability to paint at all: Champfleury complained of the common view that Courbet studied painting while minding hogs. Courbet himself liked to put it abroad that he was self-taught, and though scholarship shows that he in fact had masters, certainly no one taught him to paint as he did: an early admirer recalls being overwhelmed by the obvious originality, not merely in the subjects treated but in the style of painting fashioned to treat them with. But the caricatures testify to a wide pictorial literacy on the part of readers: Courbet was always news, and the Salons, at that epoch the only public places art could be seen, always occasioned intense reaction and discussion. So whatever he showed aroused partisan and often indignant response, since something a good bit more conventional, after all, was expected of art. One has to advance in time to the Armory show and the field day caricaturists had with Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* to find a parallel incursion of advanced art into

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the general consciousness, and after that, perhaps, to Dali's slack watches. And one has to think of Warhol for a parallel case of an artist whose looks were commonly known. Courbet was a celebrity, with his spade beard and peasant affectations and burly frame and militant republicanism and dogmatic realism.

Yet his paintings, at their greatest, are never mere transcriptions of the visual array: between the reality and the art some metaphorical transaction supervened, for which he had no room in his reduced and austere theories. His most famous work, the stupendous *Studio of the Artist*, carries as its subtitle "A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Artistic Life." It is plain to its most casual viewer that even if the identities of each of the figures in the painting were known, some deep and powerful statement is being made concerning the power of art in the transformation and not merely the representation of life. Linda Nochlin, who together with Sarah Faunce organized the splendid show *Courbet Reconsidered* (at the Brooklyn Museum in New York until January 16, after which it travels to the Institute of Arts in Minneapolis from February 19 to April 30), devotes an essay to this great painting in the catalogue that accompanies the show. She is surely right in feeling that after everything scholarly has been said about this work, its meaning remains for even the most uninstructed of viewers to deal with, and there's no possibility of reaching closure. Like Giorgione's *La Tempesta* or Titian's *Three Ages of Man*, there is an ineradicable mystery that binds us to this work, which teases us with an answer to its puzzle that it also refuses to confirm. And as much must be said of Courbet's immense *Funeral at Ornans*, where the whole mourning population appears cramped within a low elongated space homologous with that of a tomb.

Neither of these great works could have been expected to undergo the trip to Brooklyn and Minneapolis, but a good many of the famous works assembled for this occasion share in their final strangeness. Consider, for example, the *Demoiselles de village* of 1851 (the word *demoiselles* in the title contributes to its strangeness), which is one of the treasures of the Metropolitan Museum (and will not be sent on to Minneapolis). It shows three *demoiselles*, unmarried women of good families, rather surprisingly well-dressed for the country walk they are taking across a sparsely shrubbed

moor, pausing to give a piece of bread to a cowherd while their bushy-tailed and ornamental dog stares at two prosaic cows nearby. The two cows are oddly disproportionate in scale to the women—something for which Courbet was lampooned at the time—and curiously indefinite in treatment in comparison with the *demoiselles* and the cow-girl. It is instructive to compare this masterpiece with a study hanging nearby, which shows the six creatures tiny in relationship to the landscape and posed in the middle distance. In the final version he has brought them up close, as if with a zoom lens, giving the figures an intensity the study lacked without dissipating—in fact increasing—the acute loneliness it also conveyed. It is as if they are made smaller by being made larger. The *demoiselles* were Courbet's sisters, but in no sense is this a painting of the artist's sisters giving alms to a peasant girl. The identification of the figures no more dissolves the mood of uncanniness that penetrates the picture than the identification of the calcareous rock in the background renders the scene less mysterious. Somehow, the juxtaposition of these elegantly garbed women and a landscape as unrelenting as the moon's, creates the sort of mood one finds in Buñuel. And however one identifies that which one of the women is handing to the girl—bread? cake?—one feels that some powerful and even mystical communication is taking place between the cowherd and her benefactresses, who are almost angelic presences. A girl with two cows may not really need charity, but as a human being she may be receiving something, perhaps a kind of grace, which any of us may require. "J'ai fait du gracieux," Courbet said of this extraordinary painting. It would then be true only in the most reduced sense that he painted no angels.

Or consider the infamous *Bathers* of 1853, which shows from behind a female nude so heavily haunched she could be an emblem of fertility, poised on delicate feet in what could be a ballet position, with her right arm extended in a gesture meant, we feel, to express her own sense of bestowal as she reveals, to a seated woman, the amplitude of her fleshly beauty. The seated woman, perhaps her servant, has paused in her own disrobing—she in fact has only so far lowered her stockings—to express with her own extended arms an almost ecstatic admiration of the superb body that has, like the truth itself, become unhidden. And again some extraordinary com-

munication appears to be taking place quite out of proportion to the mere circumstance of undressing in each other's presence. The powerfully rapt face of the seated woman, her helpless arm gestures, make one think of those astonished figures in Raphael's *Transfiguration*, who receive as a revelation the truth that their leader possesses divinity. So again, it is only in the most reduced sense that Courbet painted no goddesses. It is as if the most commonplace things and persons are already so suffused with what people look for in religion that the ordinary world has all that we require for the satisfaction of our highest needs.

It cannot be pretended that every painting rises to this level of enhanced transfiguration. There is, for example, a striking study of a woman's sex that makes us realize how conventional the treatment of the genital area standardly is. This is certainly true of the male genitals, which typically serve the function, in paintings, of identifying their bearers as male, just as wings identify their bearers as angels. Rarely are penises shown the way they really look, which is why, when painted by Lucian Freud or photographed by Robert Mapplethorpe, they are so shocking. Feminist art historians have at times said that the correspondent absence in depicted females is a "lack," which is analogous to suggesting that the fact that humans are wingless in most paintings shows a lack of angelic power. But Courbet's study demonstrates that women in fact possess something extraordinary, the interesting question being why what they do possess is so rarely shown. One answer may be that it requires some awkward posing to show it: The male figure displays its dangling or pronged attribute no matter what the figure is engaged in, but the female has pretty much to be shown in the sexual position itself if we are to see her sex. (Thus even in Courbet's exquisite painting of lesbian lovers asleep in one another's arms and legs, the genitals do not show themselves, and are at best alluded to through the pink and red fold of the coverlet held by one of the furiously sleeping women.) Courbet's model has her legs spread, her shift pulled high enough to uncover her breasts and cover her face, and her shaggy and humid cleft is open to our gaze. Still, it is what it is and not some other thing, as Bishop Butler said, and Courbet tacitly concedes that realism is not enough by giving the work the preposterously inflated title *The Origin of the World*. (It is appropriate that this

work comes from the private collection of that sly phallogogist, Jacques Lacan.)

Realism similarly reveals its limits in Courbet's portraits, especially those in which the sitter is engaged in no action other than sitting for a portrait. They are characteristically wooden and inert, and worse than that, they reveal the essential ugliness of Courbet's way with paint, which is, as it were, plastered and spackled against the surface, yielding an uningratiating opacity. Courbet appears to have invented this style of painting—or of putting paint on—though I noticed some similarities to the paint quality of

Corot (in a fine exhibition of nineteenth-century French paintings from its own collections, which the Brooklyn has hung on its ground floor). Still, the surfaces of Corot are like a kind of silvery skin—the reality breathes through its representation—while the surfaces of Courbet are sullen and occlusive. If there is evidence of his having been self-taught, it resides, I think, in the unyielding blackness of so much of his work. It is as if he sought to emulate the masters, painting light into dark, but left too much black behind, unredeemed by color. But perhaps this depressing effect is due to

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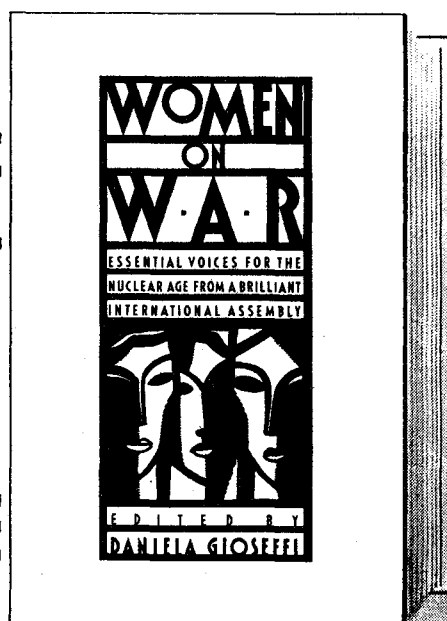
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THE BOOK

The book, which is based on the show, is an international bestseller. The Village Voice revealed that the U.S. State Department grew worried about its impact overseas and commissioned photographers to present the "other side" of America. Written in a personal tone it is now a popular classroom supplement in American schools. 800 photos, the bulk in color.

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the work having been done in studios, under indoor light, and looking retrospectively bleak in the light of the *plein air* openness of Impressionist color. *The Studio of the Artist* reveals many things, among them the fact that the painting the artist is working on in that vast and gloomy space is a landscape.

The palpable fact that many of Courbet's works were achieved in a studio collides, at times almost painfully, with some of the pretenses of realism. There is an unfortunate painting of some sort of bathing beauty, paddling a kind of scull over painted waves. The woman would have been rejected by the art director of *The Police Gazette*, but my objection is that the model has so obviously been posed in the studio and then given an outdoor setting with unconvincing seagulls and artificial waves, that we realize that some unfortunate compromise with realism has been made. There is another study of a woman half-emerged from the surrounding water, her arms behind her head, lifting her handsome breasts. The realistic touch of hair under her arms in no degree mitigates the artificiality of the foam Courbet has slathered around her middle.

But no such issue arises with the profound paintings of trout hooked and bleeding from the gills done in 1873, when Courbet was crushed by the humiliation of imprisonment for his part in the pulling down of the Vendôme Column under the Commune, and had to go into exile to escape the terrible financial penalty he alone was made to bear. Mortally trapped, out of its element, breathing its last, the tragic fish is Courbet himself in one of the last of his real allegories, a powerful and unforgettable self-portrait of a fatally caught creature.

The Brooklyn Museum is one of the great under-thronged art spaces of the New York area. It would be difficult for those buffeted by the mobs at the Degas show at the Met - feeling, as Gretchen Simpson remarked, as if one were inside a gerbil cage, because of the deafening chirps that rise from headphones whose wearers are being edified by Philippe de Montebello - to imagine that but a short subway ride away they could reconsider one of the masters of nineteenth-century realism, in spacious galleries sparsely occupied by persons as serious as themselves. This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to sort things out a bit with this awkward artist, tiresome and bombastic, crafty and windy at once, who

was also a genius, a moral poet, an artistic metaphysician, a man who so heeded Daumier's imperative to be of his own times that he transcended them. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Phaedra Britannica

Rosmersholm

"Rumors"

Our Town

The Rimers of Eldritch

Phaedra Britannica is an inspired adaptation of Racine. *Phaedra* by the British poet and playwright Tony Harrison who transposes the story from the author's eternally anachronistic Louis XIV Greece to a seductively probable India circa 1850. He does not effect this transposition by the mere fiats of set design and costumery, such as is customary of the opera stage (for instance, the English National Opera's version of *Rigoletto* which was set, visually, in Prohibition era Little Italy, though James Fenton's translated libretto rarely acknowledged this conceptual leap). Harrison follows Racine in the overall arrangement of scenes, and his pentameter couplets crackle with electricity or slide by liquidly at levels of speed and intensity approximately Racinean, but Harrison allows himself the liberties he needs to give point and pungency to his Raj parallels. The final result is so far superior to other versions of Racine I've read or seen in English that it surely deserves to become the definitive version, at least with regard to performance in the theater: It plays.

The C.S.C. Repertory production, directed by Carey Perloff, was not an unalloyed joy. Jack Stehlin, as the Hippolytus figure (here called Thomas Theophilus), lacked both the actorly aplomb for playing Racine, even as rescored by Harrison, and (a crueler lack) the kind of good looks that explain Phaedra's mad love (or the charisma some great actors have that can make us believe in their beauty as the friendliest of mirror might). Thomas is the son of the Governor (Theseus) by an Indian woman, and one need not have seen that many movies from India to know the kind of Anglo-Indian face the author must have had in mind for this character. Unfortunately for Stehlin, the two characters who act as Thomas's confidants, his tuto

and his betrothed, are the other two weak elements in the cast. Richard Riehle, as the tutor, is under the onus of delivering his first scene at a slowed-down tempo calculated to school the audience's ears to Harrison's couplets (no doubt at Perloff's insistence). Happily, by the time he gets to his great set piece describing Hippolytus's death, his performance is no longer so exasperatingly *retardando*.

But never mind those failings, for the excellences of the production far outweigh them, beginning with Caroline Lagerfelt in the role of The Governor's Wife, i.e., as Phaedra. A Phaedra who starts from the moment she enters, tipping sideways in her poison-green crinolined gown, a figure of primal fascination. Imagine the dark, Mrs. Hyde side of Deborah Kerr as she appeared in *The King and I*, or Margaret Thatcher mad with lust. At odd moments, Lagerfelt's tongue flicks out from the side of her mouth with serpentine automatism. Her hands are placed upon the paradoxical contours of her gown (anorexia above the waist, the ballooning hoopskirts below) with sculptural precision. No ballerina could boast a nicer sense of placement, focus, timing. What more can I say? Wow! Brava!

This side of rapture there should also be applause for Rajika Puri as Ayah (the Nurse in Racine) and Bob Gunton as The Governor, the latter looking like the very spirit of imperialism, and sounding, when it comes time for him to rage, bold as brass.

Elizabeth Swados contributes an intelligent musical score that underlines the broader swells of Harrison's poetry with long-drawn groans and keenings on cello and flute. The effect is Indian without seeming slavishly imitative. The set by Donald Eastman features a classic portico of five columns, asymmetrically arranged, opening to a veranda with louvered shutters; as simple and effective as the music. Even with its faults, *Phaedra Britannica* is the most satisfying and exciting piece of theater I've seen this season.

Another woman director, Sarah Pia Anderson, who works in England with both the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, has directed a production of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* at the La Mama Annex. It merits being seen not simply for its relative rarity in production among Ibsen's canonical works but for Suzanne Bertish's performance as Rebekka West (the "new woman" who would later supply a pseudonym to



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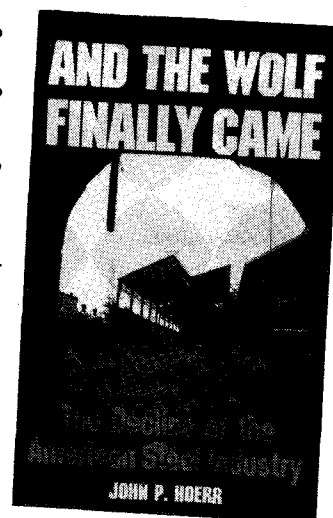
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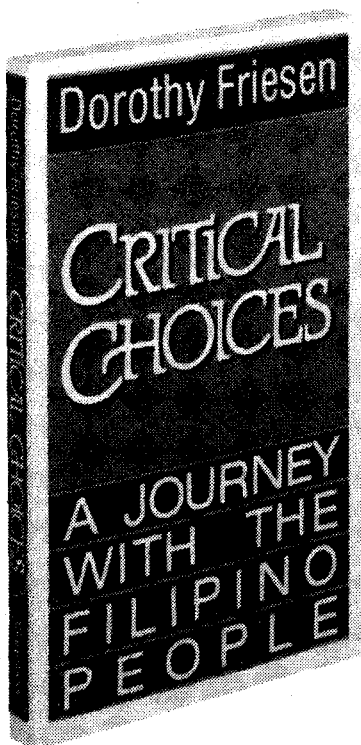
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the English writer Rebecca West).

La Mama's Annex space is ill suited to represent the Rosmer drawing room and study, which should be claustrophobic and cluttered with the impedimenta of inherited wealth. Roger Glossop's design features garage sale furniture, a vast abyss of darkness and dozens of Rosmer family portraits, all of the same era, as though Norwegian history had been a Victorian continuum extending through several centuries. The incidental music, by contrast, is exactly right, a transcendently anxious string quartet. (No doubt Mike Figgis's score was commissioned for the director's prior *Rosmersholm* at the National Theatre.)

The problem with *Rosmersholm* is that Ibsen wrote so many better plays. Its first two acts drag along like the hours of convalescence, laying out the exposition so nakedly that one is aware more of the information being withheld than of what is offered. In the character of the oppressively orthodox Rector Kroll, Ibsen is recycling familiar material, and the political maneuverings that are central to the plot have been so pruned of circumstantiality that the effect is rather of hollowness than universality. Ibsen's dismissal of radical/conservative dichotomies may be meant to register as a curse on both political houses, but in making his case so diagrammatically, he lets himself be seen stacking the deck. Ted van Griethuysen, as Kroll, brings a sly, hypocritical intelligence to the part of a man who must seem obtuse only because his social position requires it—a figure as representative now as he was a hundred years ago.

It is the sexual element of *Rosmersholm* that has always fascinated commentators on Ibsen. Rebekka's nature is as divided as Kroll's (or Rosmer's). In her love for Rosmer, she has deliberately driven his wife to suicide. Yet, for all her claims to be driven by passion, she has a horror of sex that exceeds Kroll's outrage at the idea of free love. The reasons for this ambivalence are hinted at in the text (she may unwittingly have committed incest with her father) but never stated. In her Act III confession scene, Suzanne Bertish soars, and in the scenes leading to her suicide pact with Rosmer, she scores almost as large a success. The problem is Rosmer—but whether it is this particular Rosmer, John Shea, or Ibsen's character as such, I can't say, since I found Shea convincing, but only as a wimp and simpleton. Ibsen's heroines are usually so much sturdier than

his menfolk, and few of Ibsen's male protagonists are as off-putting as Rosmer, of whom the family servant notes that no one has ever seen him laugh. His political sentiments are of the sort, bro-midic and soft-headed, that even a hundred years ago could give a bad name to liberalism. And his one brainstorm is the suicide pact.

Neil Simon's *"Rumors"* at the Broadhurst is another play about suicide, but as befits its character as a farce the suicide is botched, and, moreover, botched by a character who remains offstage (though in the spotlight) for the rest of the evening. Further, none of the eight guests who appear for a party at the would-be suicide's posh suburban mansion are prepared to say the word "suicide" (there was an accident with a gun; an earlobe is bleeding), much less to speculate what motive their self-destructing host may have had. The audience is left free to make the connection that this is a comedy about Donald Manes, who, like the man bleeding offstage, is a New York politico who flunked his first suicide attempt. But, as we all know, Manes's second attempt was a success, and so as the guests arrive and begin to dither and scheme how not to be implicated in the "accident," the audience is waiting for the next gunshot. Simon's characters engage in nothing but trivial pursuits. They never wheel and deal before us, nor do they flirt; they only kvetch and jitter. The disparity between the dire situation and their silly antics is the drollness on which the whole enterprise is founded.

People with a prior conviction that Neil Simon is not to be taken seriously will not have their minds changed, while admirers of the kindlier, sentimental Simon of the Brighton Beach trilogy will not find any such warmth in *"Rumors."* But I thought it was quite funny, albeit light as Styrofoam, and my companion at the theater, a proper intellectual in most circumstances, laughed his head off at the same rate I did. My only problem with *"Rumors"* are those quotation marks around the title, which serve no grammatical purpose, and are surely an example of the common solecism, quotation marks used for emphasis, as in hand-lettered placards advertising FISH "FRESH" TODAY or GENUINE "GOLD" WATCHES.

Our Town is being revived by the folks at Lincoln Center (though at the Lyceum, a Broadway theater, since *Anything Goes* continues to occupy the Vi-

vian Beaumont stage), and if you have young'uns who have not yet been inducted into Thornton Wilder's bourgeois initiation rite, now's the time. No one since Wilder has managed so artfully to create a simulation of the ideal American small town that Norman Rockwell painted and we all dream of having come from. (The nearest contender is probably Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegone.) The script is virtually fail-safe, since, as with a Nativity pageant, amateurishness in the performers is apt to register as part of its homespun charm, for which reason it makes a perfect senior class play, where a real-life George and Emily can be cast as George and Emily.

In Gregory Mosher's production two fledgling movie stars, Eric Stoltz and Penelope Ann Miller, play George and Emily, and they are very nice, and so is everyone else in the large cast, including Spalding Gray as the Stage Manager, though New York's senior drama critic, Edna Mae Oliver, at *The New Yorker*, found his performance so far inferior to that of the original interpreter of the role in A.D. 1938, Frank Craven, that it "blighted" the entire show for her. Unable to challenge a judgment based on such formidable seniority, I can take comfort in the callowness of my relative youth (I'm not yet 50), for Gray seemed to me to do the job O.K.

Our Town is surely one of those plays that ought to be revived at regular intervals so that successive generations will be able to have seen it at an appropriately impressionable age, but it does seem a bit of a waste of Lincoln Center's limited resources for them to undertake a job that virtually anyone could accomplish. As I watched it, it occurred to me how

much more fun it would be to see a genuine amateur production of the better sort, and to that end I make the following modest proposal. Philanthropic foundations please note: Why not have an annual contest among all the high schools in the country that have decided to produce *Our Town* (or another such quintessential chestnut) in any given year, and import the best of these to Broadway for a summer's run? The winners would have a taste of glory, and tourists would flock to it. It would be summer stock in reverse, and an apposite celebration of those small town virtues the play proclaims.

Lanford Wilson's *The Rimers of Eldritch*, a play from 1967 recently revived at the Second Stage Theatre, also aspires to sum up small town America, but the resemblance to *Our Town* stops there. The play, and the production, were not without merits, but they were textural more than textual. Wilson has a good ear and a canny sense of keeping things moving along, and the director, Mark Brokaw, has made the most of these assets, knitting the fragmented vocal lines of the seventeen cast members into a kind of aural patchwork quilt that is a pleasure to contemplate until the plot begins to emerge from the welter of flashbacks and flash-forwards.

The plot is silly. It concerns the accidental shooting of the resident derelict of the town of Eldritch by a spinster who thinks, mistakenly, that the old geezer has been attempting to rape Eva, a crippled teen-age girl (performed with a glint of madness by Danielle Du Clos), when in fact the dear old fellow has been trying to *prevent* Eva's teen-age boyfriend

IN PASSING

This afternoon I saw a woman on Park Avenue when daylight was baffled by setbacks. She looked as you might years from now if we had never met. Under those ziggurats she stood, around her the crosswalk's rumpled hide of even bars striving, white and black, and I saw her nod and raise her throat to the light's acute descent — fiercely, vainly, I thought at first: let November match this cheekbone's Lithuanian shadow (as if to say), let the triumph of concrete ramparts somehow narrow and cure the light in these eyes from green to dull gray. But then the cage of perception closed gently: exactly *not* vanity being intended by her bare throat; rather, as if beseeching the light to be recumbent and vulnerable. Slowly I know her now as I did you once by this answering mistake.

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from raping her, a crime for which the boyfriend's not really to blame, however, since Eva, though she spouts a lot of poetry, has been egging him on all through the play. This has to amount to one of the most ill-conceived acts of violence ever enacted on a stage, but Wilson evidently believes his play represents an indictment of all that is cramped, mean and hypocritical in Averageville. What Wilson has actually achieved is a précis of all those similar depictions of small town life in the plays of William Inge and Tennessee Williams, including the traditional drifter who is irresistible to all the town's sexually deprived women and a pair of sanctimonious old biddies who act as chorus (delightfully mugged by Georgia Creighton and Mary Jay). In general, the ladies of the cast outperform the gentlemen, but that may be because the text's buried but unquiet misogyny gives them more opportunity to be complex and interesting.

For those who may wonder what the title means: It comes from Eva's moment of maximum gush, when she tells her boyfriend how she would like to be another Jack Frost and fly over the town of Eldritch, covering it with hoarfrost and turning it into a thing of wonder and beauty. Hoarfrost = rime, which would make her a Rimer of Eldritch. □

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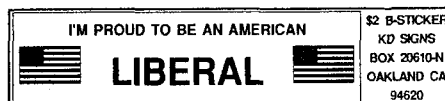
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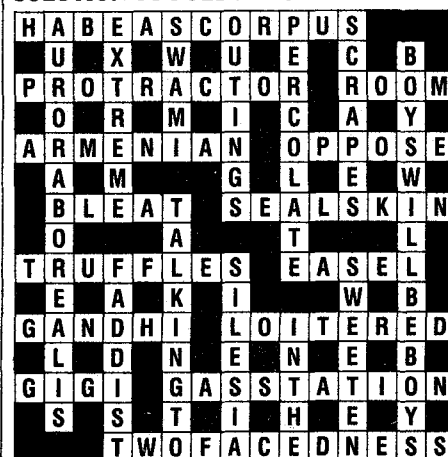
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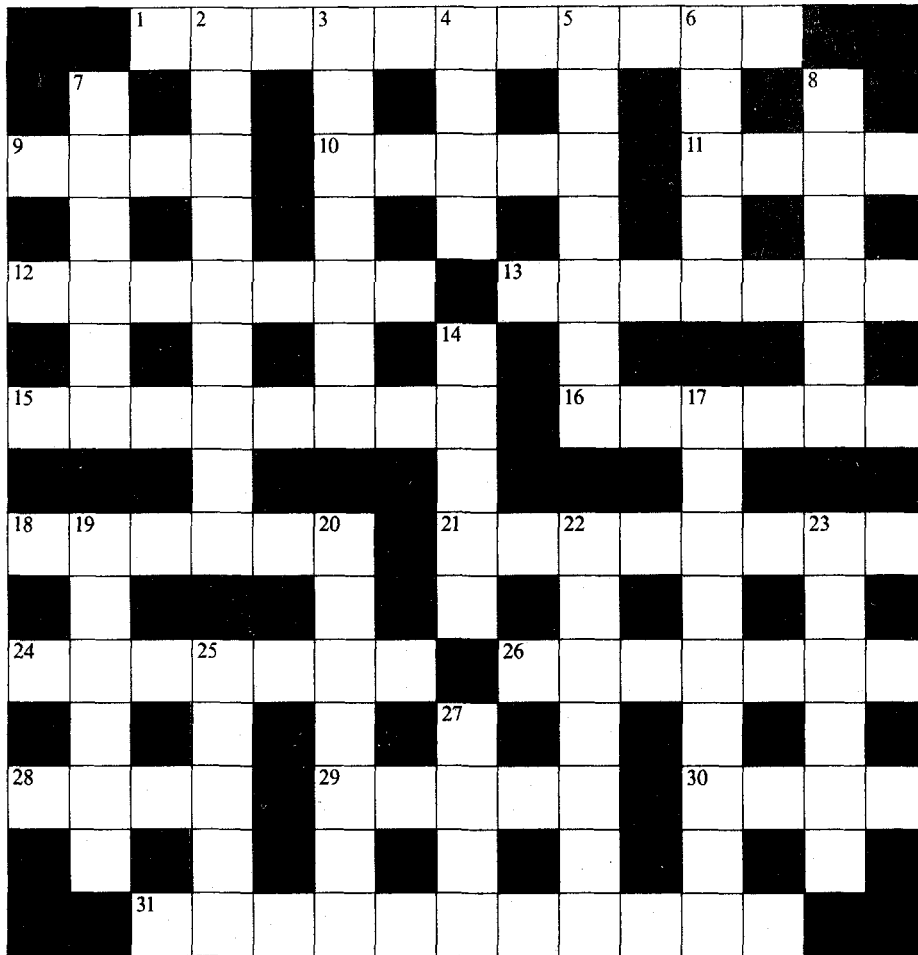
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ACROSS

- 1 Such neat quarters for company business! (7,4)
 9 The picture certainly reveals a classical story! (4)
 10 The country misses the final point, making money there. (5)
 11 and 29 Saw here, perhaps, a cats-paw gets what may be right in front of a body! (4,5)
 12 and 24 Matters of electricity with which we should all be concerned. (7,7)
 13 It might be tough, but a collar of lace goes well on a Scotsman. (7)
 15 Entering an IOU of the French takes on what the barking dog would never be doing! (8)
 16 Look around when Christmas is returning, and you'll have to leave the federation. (6)
 18 Dog possibly associated with Darwin. (6)
 21 Has an effect on part of what the shrimp ingests. (8)
 24 See 12
 26 When declared, it should be in the decimal version. (7)
 28 See 4 down
 29 See 11
 30 Small hotels found on more than one river of Austria. (4)
 31 12 might be going back and forth like this, as the bad giant learnt! (11)

DOWN

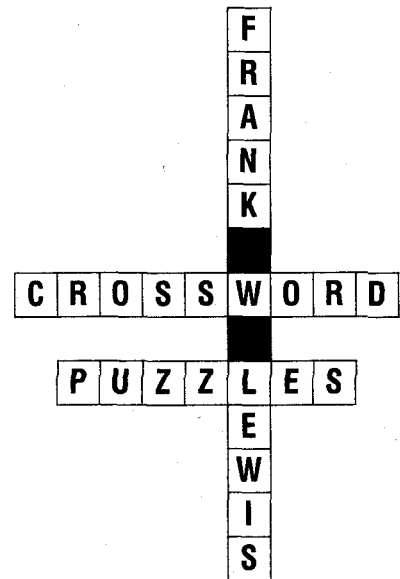
- 2 and 25 The backer of disc hits is supposed to know what you did wrong! (9,5)

- 3 In brief, fending this way shows one gets respect in certain countries. (7)
 4 and 28 across Possibly yelled by a backer of the competition Twain covered, just for the kids! (4,4)
 5 Gets back and works the score up? (7)
 6 and 17 Not fit to make it—though I count it food, no change is required. (3,2,9)
 7 The tree that might be suitable for 1 across? (6)
 8 and 14 Nary a stick, but it takes a profit occasionally! (3,3,5)
 17 See 6
 19 You try to make one, since it's in a salamander. (6)
 20 Trouble with the listening device? (7)
 22 The overcoat looks like it's just made for the sickly looking little kid! (7)
 23 They go out on the stage in classic fashion. (6)
 25 See 2
 27 Bend over like Cassius? (4)

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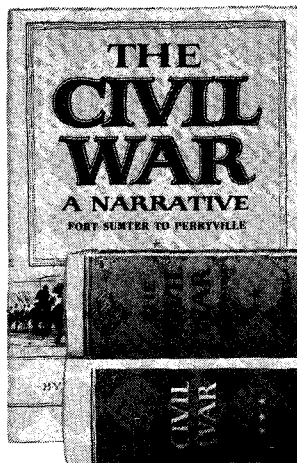
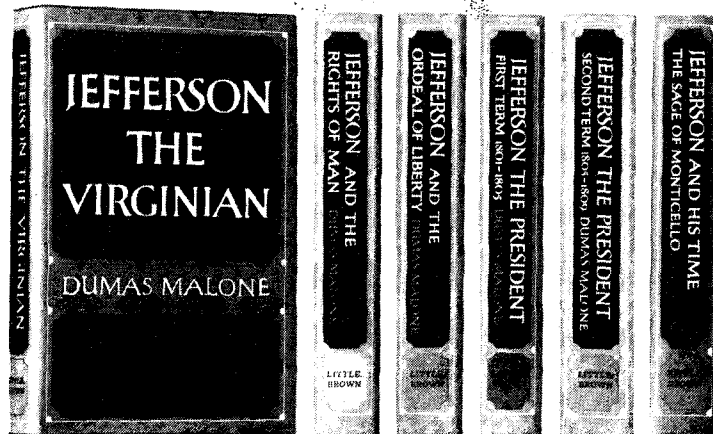
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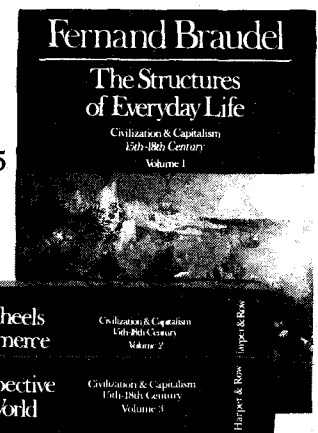
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